HACK/SLASH™

HORROR

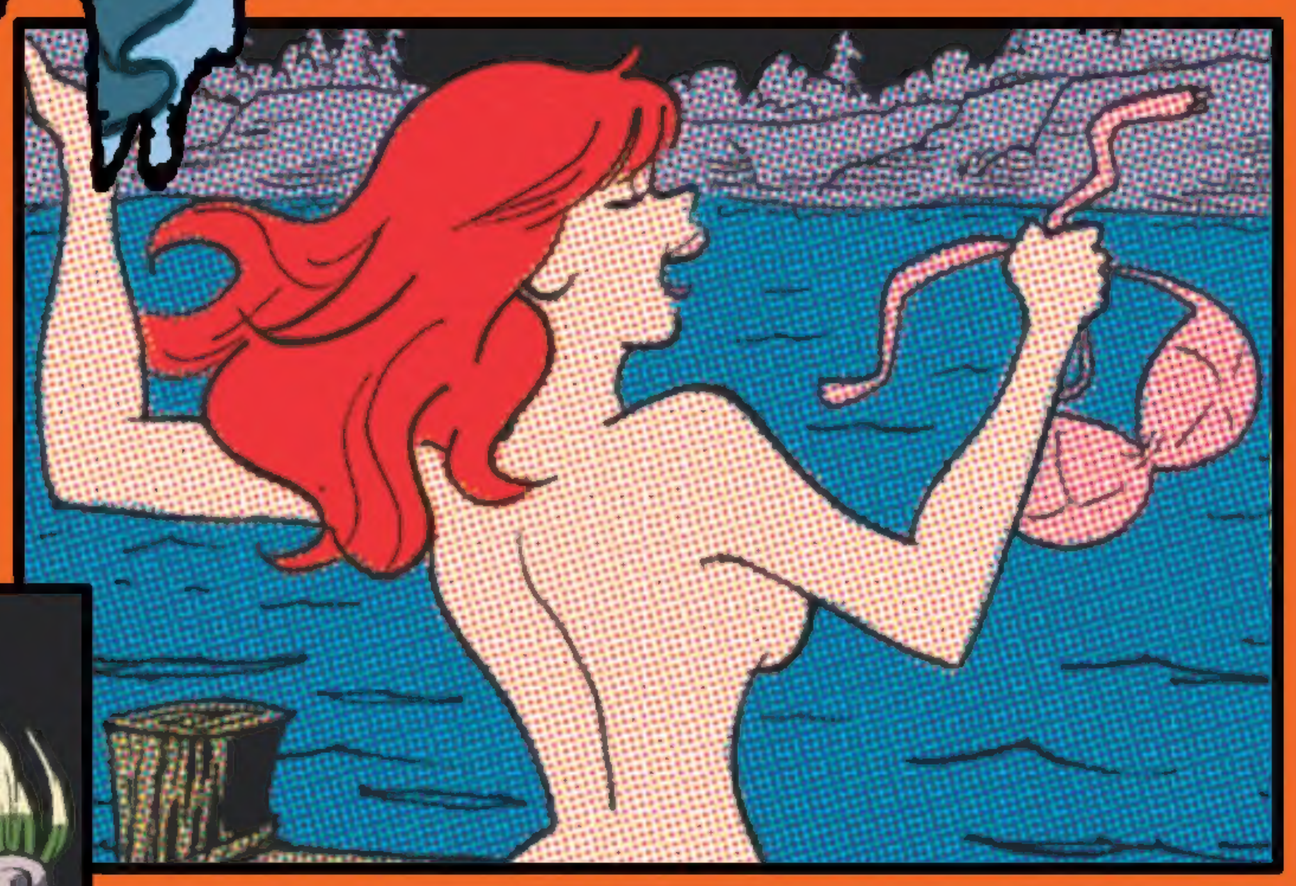
MERHOFF

AN IMAGE COMICS PRODUCTION CREATED BY TIM SEELEY & STEFANO CASELLI
WRITTEN BY TIM SEELEY WITH ART BY EMILY STONE
BRYAN BAUGH SOPHIE CAMPBELL MIKE DIMAYUGA DAN LEISTER
CHRIS BURNHAM DAVID BALDEON BUZ HASSON KEN HAESER CRANK!
KEVIN MELLON MARK ENGLERT and many others

BACK TO THE SLASH™

DELUXE EDITION

VOLUME 3



A

TIM SEELEY/STEFANO CASELLI
PRODUCTION

WRITER
TIM SEELEY

DESIGN
SEAN DOVE & TIM SEELEY

PRODUCTION
KIT CAOAGAS

IMAGE COMICS, INC. • **Robert Kirkman**: Chief Operating Officer • **Erik Larsen**: Chief Financial Officer • **Todd McFarlane**: President • **Marc Silvestri**: Chief Executive Officer • **Jim Valentino**: Vice President • **Eric Stephenson**: Publisher / Chief Creative Officer • **Nicole Lapalme**: Vice President of Finance • **Leanna Caunter**: Accounting Analyst • **Sue Korpela**: Accounting & HR Manager • **Matt Parkinson**: Vice President of Sales & Publishing Planning • **Lorelei Bunjes**: Vice President of Digital Strategy • **Dirk Wood**: Vice President of International Sales & Licensing • **Ryan Brewer**: International Sales & Licensing Manager • **Alex Cox**: Director of Direct Market Sales • **Chloe Ramos**: Book Market & Library Sales Manager • **Emilio Bautista**: Digital Sales Coordinator • **Jon Schlaffman**: Specialty Sales Coordinator • **Kat Salazar**: Vice President of PR & Marketing • **Deanna Phelps**: Marketing Design Manager • **Drew Fitzgerald**: Marketing Content Associate • **Heather Doornink**: Vice President of Production • **Drew Gill**: Art Director • **Hilary DiLoreto**: *Print Manager* • **Tricia Ramos**: Traffic Manager • **Melissa Gifford**: Content Manager • **Erika Schnatz**: *Senior Production Artist* • **Wesley Griffith**: Production Artist • **Rich Fowlks**: Production Artist • **IMAGECOMICS.COM**

HACK/SLASH DELUXE EDITION, VOL. 3. Digital edition. May 2023. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2023 HACK/SLASH, INC. All rights reserved. Contains material originally published in single magazine form by Devil's Due Comics as HACK/SLASH #18-32 and ENTRY WOUND ONE-SHOT, by www.halloweenman.com as the serialized HACKOWEEN #1-2; and by Zenescope as THE LIVING CORPSE ANNUAL #1. "Hack/Slash," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Hack/Slash, Inc., unless otherwise noted. MILK AND CHEESE and all related characters are ™ and ©, Evan Dorkin, 2023. HALLOWEEN MAN and all related characters are ™ and ©, Drew Edwards, 2023. THE LIVING CORPSE and all related characters are ™ and ©, Ken Haeser and Buz Hasson, 2023. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. For international rights, contact: foreignlicensing@imagecomics.com.

CLOSER

Originally Hack/Slash #18-20

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Emily Stone & Kevin Mellon
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS Mike O'Sullivan

MIND KILLER

Originally Hack/Slash #21-22

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Emily Stone
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS Mike O'Sullivan

MAD, MAD MAILMAN

Originally Hack/Slash #23

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Sophie Campbell
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS Mike O'Sullivan

BLOOD BLOWER

Originally Hack/Slash #23

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Mike Dimayuga
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS Mike O'Sullivan

ENTRY WOUND

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Tim Seeley
COLORS Rachelle Rosenberg
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS Mike O'Sullivan

SONS OF MAN

Originally Hack/Slash #24-25

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Bryan Baugh
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS Mike O'Sullivan & James Lowder

FOES AND FORTUNES

Originally Hack/Slash #26-27

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Bryan Baugh
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS James Lowder

SOMETHING'S FISHY

Originally Hack/Slash #28

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Dan Parent, Daniel Leister
INKS Sean K. Dove
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS James Lowder

SUPER SIDEKICK SLEEPOVER PRELUDE

Originally Hack/Slash #29

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Chris Burnham, Sophie Campbell, Daniel Leister, & Jason Millet
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS James Lowder

SUPER SIDEKICK SLEEPOVER SLAUGHTER

Originally Hack/Slash #29

STORY Tim Seeley
ART Daniel Leister
COLORS Mark Englert
LETTERS CRANK!
EDITS James Lowder

HACKOWEEN

SCRIPT Drew Edwards
PENCILS David Baldeon
INKS Scott D.M. Simmons
COLORS Marc Lewis
LETTERS & ART
DIRECTION Brian J. Crowley
EDITS Russell Hillman

LIVING CORPSE ANNUAL

SCRIPT Ken Haeser
ART Buz Hasson & Ken Haeser
COLORS Ken Haeser & Chris Hewitt
LETTERS Ken Haeser

THE GIRL IN THE FISHNET TIGHTS

STORY Stephen Graham Jones
ILLUSTRATIONS Jim Terry

HACK/SLASH™

CLOSER

HACK/SLASH #20A by **ERIC JONES**

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

NEAR DUSK.

C'MON, POOCH! IT'S COLDER THAN A WITCH'S TIT OUT HERE!

Master, I cannot expunge my vile wastes while you command your humble Pooch.

FUCKIN' CHINK... STEALIN' MY HOUSE AN' MY LISA.

I'M MUNNA TELL HIM TO **GETTHEFUCKOUT...**

DEAR GOD, THAT WAS A HOT, STINKY ONE.

Yes. Hot and stinky. You should pick it up as Mistress Lisa asks, yes?

YEAH, YEAH. ***LATER.*** WHAT'S THE HURT? IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE IS GONNA STEP IN--

AWWWW, **SHIIIIIT!**

FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS.

117 MILES SOUTHEAST OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA.

IT HAS BEEN 14 HOURS SINCE WE LEFT THE NEW MEXICO.

14 HOURS SINCE CASSANDRA WATCHED HER MOTHER DIE. HER FATHER TOO. 14 HOURS SINCE SHE WATCHED THEM BURN.

14 HOURS SINCE SHE SAID A WORD. MADE A NOISE.

SHE LIES. DOES NOT MOVE. COVERED IN BLOOD.

I HAVE ASKED HER IF SHE NEEDS THINGS. NEEDS ORANGE CREAM SODA. NEEDS MICROWAVE BURRITOS. NO WORDS. NO SOUND. JUST BLUE EYES.

CASSANDRA SAYS I AM HER BEST FRIEND. THAT ALL WE HAVE IS EACH OTHER.

WHEN WE SEE TERRIBLE THINGS, I HOLD HER. SHE CRIES. WE EAT MICROWAVE BURRITOS. ORANGE CREAM SODAS.

BUT, NOW... I AM NOT WHAT SHE NEEDS.

GEORGIA? CASSANDRA... SHE...

...SHE NEEDS *YOU.*

EMINENCE.

KYLE BELL! THIS IS THE POLICE!

HEY, **MR. HOYNE.** WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT ON THIS FINE EVENIN'?

I'M WORKING, KYLE. AND, I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN ***SPYING*** AROUND LISA ELSTEN'S PLACE.

OH... I WUZ JUST SWINGING BY TO CHECK ON HER, Y'KNOW? HER AN' THE LIL' GOOK ARE DOIN' SOME WEIRD SHIT OVER THERE, MAN...

THEY GOT LIKE AN **ALIEN DOG**... HE'S ALL PINK AND HAIRLESS. AND, I WUZ JUS' TRYING TO BE, LIKE, ALL FOX MULDER AND MAKE SURE IT DIDN'T, LIKE... **LAY EGGS** IN LISA'S BRAIN OR SOMETHING.

KYLE, YOU WERE STUMBLING AROUND THE YARD, YELLING.

SO, HOW ABOUT YOU HOP IN THE CAR, AND I'LL RUN YOU DOWN TO THE STATION FOR A NICE HOT CHOCOLATE AND A ***TRESPASSING CITATION?***

YOU SURE YOU DON' WANN' BE MY SCULLY, AND WE'LL GO HUNT DOWN THE ALIEN **TOGETHER?**

=SIGH=

GET IN THE CAR, BELL.

I'M...

...I'M REALLY SORRY, MR. HOYNE.

TELL LISA I'M SORRY TOO.

=SNIFF= DID YOU STEP IN DOG SHI--

CAR 23. WHAT'S YOUR 10-38?

HEADING BACK TO THE STATION ON 142.

CAN YOU SWING BY THE HARVEY PLACE FOR A POSSIBLE WILD ANIMAL INCIDENT?

WILL DO.

GET THIS... DOC HARVEY SAYS HE SAW A BIGFOOT.

BIGFOOT? UH... YEAH, BE THERE IN FIVE. 10-4.

YOU WHISTLE *ONE NOTE* OF THE X-FILES THEME, AND I'LL DROP YOU OFF RIGHT--

OH FUCK!

SKRRRREEEEEK!

KRRROM!

THOOMP!

BELL! YOU OKAY?!

WHA--?!

FOOF!

AAAAAHHHHHH!

POTTS CAMP, MISSISSIPPI.

Holida
Inn
EXPRESS

NO SPLASHING! THE HOT TUB'S FER RELAXIN', NOT HORSEPL--

EMINENCE.

=>HUNH HUNH<=

WHO'S THERE?! IS... IS THAT YOU, BOBBY?!

KRASH!

AGGGGK!!

=SNFF=

KUCHA ROOKA CHRA.

KRK!

THE LOW-BEASTS'S FILTH ON YOU. YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS. YOU WILL LEAD ME TO THE LOW BEAST.

AGGGGGHHH!

OH FUCK! GODDAMN BIGFOOT!

OR I BREAK ALL YOUR PARTS.

POTTS CAMP

KACHUNK KACHUNK

VLAD! I'M SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG...

YOUR CAR...?

YEAH, ALL THIS DRIVING... WELL... IT DOESN'T MATTER...

WHERE'S CASSIE?

SHE IS HERE. SHE IS LAYING IN BED... SHE HAS NOT SPOKEN IN A DAY.

OH GOSH... POOR THING! HER MOM AND DAD... I HOPE I CAN HELP.

I HAVE BROUGHT A FRIEND...

CASSIE?

MARGARET.

OH, HONEY. I'M SO SORRY!

WHAT'LL YOU HAVE, BIG GUY?

A *WATER*. WITH ICE.

HURM. INSTEAD, I WILL HAVE A *BEER*. A *BIG* ONE.

HAVING A ROUGH NIGHT?

NO...

YES.

MY FRIEND WILL NOT TALK TO ME. BUT SHE *WILL* TALK TO ANOTHER.

SORRY TO HEAR THAT, PAL. WOULD IT HELP...

...IF I KILLED YOU?

WOULD IT HELP IF WE ALL KILLED YOU?

YOU'RE *WHAT?*

I'M DONE. NO MORE CASSIE THE SLASHER SLAYER.

BUT, ALL THOSE PEOPLE YOU'VE *SAVED...*

ALL FOR THE WRONG REASONS. I WAS *PISSED* AT MY MOM. PISSED AT *MYSELF*. I TURNED MYSELF INTO *A WEAPON*. A BULLET AIMED AT MY MOM, WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY COME AROUND AND GET ME, TOO.

BUT I WATCHED MY MOM DIE AGAIN. FINALLY MET MY DAD, AND WATCHED *HIM* DIE, TOO. THERE'S *NOTHING ELSE* FOR ME TO DO THIS FOR. NO ONE BUT ME.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW *WHO I AM*. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE WEAPON.

I CAN START OVER. I CAN TRY TO BE SOMEONE WITH *A LIFE* OTHER THAN THIS FUCKING *HORROR STORY* I'VE BEEN LIVING.

ARE YOU SURE, HONEY? ARE YOU *SURE* YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

YEAH. YEAH... I *AM*. AND I'M SCARED. *REALLY* SCARED.

BUT NOT FOR MYSELF. I'M FUCKING SCARED... BECAUSE IF WE AREN'T LIVING THIS LIFE...

...WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE *VLAD?*

KILL YOU.

KILL YOU.

RRRRAAAAGHM!

KILL YOOOF--!

HHHHH!

KRAK!

KILL YOU.

GHRAH!

KILL YOU.

KILL. KILL.

KILL. YOU.

KILL YOU.

KILL. KILL.

KILL YOU.

SKRAKK!..

FWOK!

WHOP!

KILL.

SWOK!

KILL.

KILL.

KILL.

KRASH!

HURR.
KILL YOU.
KILL.
KILL.
YOU.
KILL.
KILL YOU.
KILL.
KILL YOU.
KILL.
THE MILK AND CHEESE DAIRY MEN.
KILL YOU.
KILL YOU.
GHUH!

EMINENCE.

GODDAMN ALIEN DOG SHIT...

THERE. NOW IF YOU HAD PICKED IT UP EARLIER LIKE YOU WERE *SUPPOSED* TO--

TOUCHÉ.

WE'D NEVER HAVE KNOWN KYLE'S DRUNK ASS WAS STUMBLING AROUND OUT HERE.

DID YOU TRY CALLING CASSIE AGAIN?

YEAH... STILL NOTHING.

SO, POOCH... YOU CAN *TALK* NOW... HOW ABOUT LEARNING TO SCOOP YOUR *OWN* DAMN DEVIL DOG TURDS?

Sniiifff.

Oh no. **NO NO.**

AW, C'MON. I WAS--

POOCH?

KRSCH!!

GHYAH!

AAAAAAAH!

GODDAMMIT, KYLE! YOU'VE GONE TOO--

--FAR?

OTHERWORLDERS!

FOR EACH MOMENT MY QUESTION IS NOT ANSWERED, THIS SOFT THING WILL LOSE ANOTHER PIECE.

THERE ARE **TWO** I SEEK. WHERE IS THE ***TRAITOR-OUS LOW-BEAST?*** THAT IS THE FIRST QUESTION.

THIS IS THE SECOND...

WHERE IS THE ***HATED CASSANDRA HACK?***

POTTS CAMP.

WOULDN'T... WELL... WOULDN'T VLAD JUST... STAY *WITH YOU?*

HOW? I MEAN, WHAT IF I DECIDE TO GO TO COLLEGE? IS VLAD GONNA BE MY *ROOMMATE?* IS HE GONNA JOIN A FRAT AND HAVE KEGGERS?

I HAVEN'T KNOWN WHAT TO EVEN *SAY* TO HIM THE LAST FEW DAYS.

WHEN I FOUND HIM, HE WAS LIVING LIFE AS A *GHOST*... AS A *FREAK*. JUST LIKE ME.

I BROUGHT HIM INTO A LIFE THAT WE COULD LIVE TOGETHER. AND IT *WORKED*. BUT HOW DO I JOIN THE *REAL WORLD* WITH VLAD?

WHEN I MET YOU... YOU... YOU ACCEPTED US AS THE FREAKS THAT WE ARE.

BUT YOU LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD. YOU MAKE IT WORK. YOU HAVE GOALS AND DREAMS. NORMAL PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

IF I DO THIS... WOULD...

...WOULD YOU HELP ME, MARGARET?

CASSIE. I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

THE THINGS I'VE *SEEN* SINCE I MET YOU. SHIT, THE PLACES I'VE *BEEN!* THE WORLD *NEEDS* YOU AND VLAD.

IF I HELP YOU GET OUT OF THIS LIFE... HOW MANY DEATHS ARE ON MY HANDS? LIVES THAT COULD HAVE BEEN *SAVED* BY YOU?

DO YOU THINK I HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF THAT?

THAT'S WHY I'LL TAKE EVERYTHING I KNOW... EVERYTHING I'VE LEARNED ABOUT SLASHERS... AND I'LL GO TO THE POLICE. AND IF THE POLICE WON'T LISTEN, I'LL GO THE MEDIA. SOMEONE WILL LISTEN. AND SOMEONE WILL TAKE UP THE REINS.

YES. OF COURSE I'LL HELP YOU, YOU PSYCHO BITCH.

THANK YOU. OH... MARGARET... WAIT. THERE'S *ONE MORE THING.*

IF I'M GOING TO DO THIS... I WANT TO FEEL *NORMAL.* I WANT TO FEEL THINGS THAT PEOPLE MY AGE FEEL.

YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU. YOU KNOW...

WELL... I JUST WANT TO... ...*KISS* YOU.

BUT...

CASSANDRA. SHE ALSO DREAMT OF THE **DAIRY MEN.**

THIS IS THE SAME DREAM. MONSTERS. CARTOONS. TOYS. THERE IS SOMETHING... SOMETHING **VERY** WRONG.

I MUST SHARE THIS WITH CASSANDRA. SHE WILL KNOW WHAT TO--

=MMMMMMM=

HM?

=MMMMMMM=

I KNOW THESE SOUNDS.

I KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN.

THEY MEAN THAT CASSANDRA...

...DOES NOT WISH TO SHARE **ANYTHING** WITH **ME.**

ELSEWHERE.

KILL YOU KILL YOU KILL YOU.

KILL YOU!

NOT STRONG ENOUGH. CAN'T KILL THE BIG, UGLY GUY YET... NOT BY *MYSELF.*

BUT THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR.

THEY **HELP YOU** WHEN YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHING ALL BY YOURSELF.

I MADE A **NEW FRIEND**. SHE'S SUCH A NICE LADY. SHE'S BEEN HELPING ME A LOT LATELY.

HER NAME IS **MUFFY**.

SHE'S MY **BESTEST** FRIEND IN THE **WHOLE WORLD**.

TO BE CONTINUED...

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

DID YOU TRY CALLING CASSIE AGAIN?

YEAH... STILL NOTHING.

SO, POOCH... YOU CAN TALK NOW... HOW ABOUT LEARNING TO SCOOP YOUR OWN DAMN DEVIL DOG TURDS?

Sniifff.

Oh no. NO NO.

One of my brethren is here. Oh, mercies.

A female. One of my many sisters, all of us spawns of the Neflords. A daughter of the Tusks.

Twice as large as the males, twice as wicked. Best for hunting.

POOCH?

AW, C'MON. I WAS--

KNRSH!!

GHYAH!

AAAAAAAH!

Best for hunting wayward assassins who did not accomplish tasks. Best for hunting poor, traitorous Pooch.

I did not kill the hated Cassandra Hack. Did not hunt her down for shaming my fathers, the Neflords. instead, poor Pooch took new masters, enjoyed their companies, and watched them play with each other's pink things.

Tusk Daughter only wants Pooch, and Hated Cassandra Hack. Master Chris and Mistress Lisa will not die for poor, lonely Pooch.

Mistress Lisa's Rolling Ball. It is heavy. It is hard.

No one will die for poor lonely Pooch. Not even the beasts in the cages in the kennel.

KRSSH!

Not even the one who is called Goblin (oh, he hates Pooch so much).

=Whunf=

Pooch is only a lowbeast. Most pathetic of all Nef Spawn.

Small and meek. Sad and so alone.

LOWBEAST!

But always loyal is poor Pooch.

Always loyal.

PSSSSSSS

YOU DARE CHALLENGE KUMA?! YOU DARE MARK THIS GROUND AS YOUR OWN?

YOU FORGET YOUR PLACE, LOWBEAST!

MUNHHHH

POTTS CAMP, MISSISSIPPI.

THIS IS AMAZING.

I'VE KISSED PEOPLE BEFORE.

IN FIFTH GRADE, WHEN DAVE RICHARDS TOLD ME TO MEET HIM UNDER THE BLEACHERS. AT THE SHELTER, WHEN MATT SANTUCCI TRIED TO GET IN MY PANTS ON A DARE. AT THE CLUB, WHEN I WAS DRUNK FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHEN I KISSED AMBER AND IMAGINED MARGARET.

I'M NOT IMAGINING NOW. I'M HERE. MARGARET'S HERE. AND HER LIPS ARE WARM AND SOFT, AND I CAN FEEL HER HEART FLUTTERING NEXT TO MY CHEST.

SHE'S SCARED... SHE'S NEVER KISSED A GIRL BEFORE. BUT SHE LIKES **THIS**. SHE LIKES **ME**.

NO ONE'S TRYING TO GET ANY-THING. THIS ISN'T BAIT FOR SOME PSYCHO KILLER IN A BAD MASK.

THIS IS JUST **ME**, AND THIS BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO **UNDERSTANDS** ME. WHO CAME ALL THE WAY FROM FLORIDA TO COMFORT ME.

OH MY GOD. SHE LIKES THIS.

SHE LIKES ME.

LAST CALL, BIG GUY.

THEN, I WILL HAVE ANOTHER.

BEER TASTES VERY BAD. YET MANY OF THE TEENS CASSANDRA AND I FIND ARE VERY FULL OF IT.

HURM. AND THIS FEELING THAT COMES WITH IT. IT IS NOT SO GOOD AS THEY SAY.

THE BEERS DO NOT WASH AWAY... *ANGER*. WHY IS CASSANDRA BEING SO CLOSE TO THAT GIRL, BUT VERY FAR FROM ME?

HOWDY, BOYS. ABOUT TO CLOSE SHOP, BUT THERE'S STILL TIME FOR A NIGHTCAP.

HEY, MAN. GIMME TWO SHOTS OF WILD TURKEY.

HEY MAN. WHAT'S WITH THE HOOD? TRYING TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE?

IT IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

HA! YA HEAR THAT, MAN? I TRY TO BE NICE, AN' THIS FUCKER GETS ALL *IMPOLITE* ON ME?

NO SHIT, MAN. AND THAT *VOICE*. HEY MAN, YOU SMOKE TEN PACKS A DAY?

I WISH. TO BE LEFT. *ALONE.*

HOLY DAMN! NO WONDER HE'S IN SUCH A BAD MOOD!

FACE LIKE THE FLOOR OF A ROADSIDE SHITTER!

WE'LL DRINK TO YOU, MY FRIEND.

YEP... TO HAVING A BAD DAY, AND A FACE THAT LOOKS LIKE AN *ASSHOLE.*

ONE PUSH. ONE LITTLE SHOVE. AND THEY WILL FIGHT ME.

BUT I KNOW WHY I WISH TO FIGHT THESE MEN. AND I KNOW THAT IT IS NOT WHY I FIGHT: I FIGHT TO *SURVIVE*. TO PROTECT THE *INNOCENTS*. TO PROTECT *CASSANDRA*...

I WILL NOT FIGHT BECAUSE IT MAKES ME ANGRY TO BE *WITHOUT HER.*

EMINENCE.

OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD!

BE CAREFUL! HE COULD BLEED OUT AT ANY TIME!

YEAH, I KNOW!

GOD-DAMNED PRICK... COULDN'T HAVE GONE TO THE GYM A FEW LESS TIMES COULD YOU? FUCKING "BRUCE WILLIS, MALE NURSE."

OH SHIT!

THE ARM.

WHAT?

WE LEFT HIS FUCKING ARM STUCK TO THE WALL! DON'T YOU HAVE TO GET THAT ON ICE OR SOMETHING?!

WHATEVER THE HELL THAT THING WAS, KYLE, YOU BETTER HOPE POOCH IS GIVING IT A HELL OF A RUN...

OH, GOD! I'LL GO GET IT!

Pooch may be a lowbeast, most spat upon of all Nef-spawn. But Pooch is fast. Faster than Tusk Daughter.

But not so much faster.

LOWBEAST!

Lowly Pooch is also much smaller. Much easier for him...

...to stop.

GHRUH!

I HAVE YOU, LOWBEAST!

KU CHA RA!

Oh no.

It is so cold here, this place called Indiana.

CROOM!

KRK!

SPLOOSH

The otherworlders have grown used to it. They grow layers of smelly, greasy fur. They wear fake skins.

But for we of Nef, the cold is new. Humbles we children of Nef. Brings us pain.

Clouds our senses.

KRAK!

The Daughters may be the strongest and most vicious of our kind...

CHOK!

...but even they are not without soft, sensitive parts.

HTTTchchchchchc.

Poorest Pooch. So cold. How the one called Goblin will rejoice to know I have died here.

What will Master Chris think when he finds that loyal Pooch is frozen, on a rock, like a lowly, meek statue?

Yes, yes... He will thank Pooch for saving his friend, the Hated Cassandra Hack from being a severed head on the tusk of this daughter.

And maybe...

...maybe he will pet the corpse of his loyal Pooch.

POTTS CAMP

SHOULD WE... Y'KNOW?

JUMPING RIGHT IN, ARE WE? I THOUGHT YOU WERE WAITING FOR A CERTAIN CHARISMATIC ACTOR MAN.

HA! DON'T... DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME. I'M SCARED ENOUGH OF ALL THIS AS IT IS. BUT, I...

...DO *YOU* WANT TO?

I'M JUST JOINING THE REAL WORLD, YOU KNOW? IT SEEMS LIKE THAT MIGHT BE A LITTLE MUCH TO JUMP INTO RIGHT NOW. BABY STEPS, RIGHT?

YEAH... YEAH, BABY STEPS. I JUST... I DIDN'T KNOW I'D WANT TO... OR... WELL...

SHHHH. IT'S OKAY. THIS ISN'T LIKE WHEN WE WERE STUCK ON NEF AND MIGHT HAVE HAD TO HURRY TO LOSE IT. NOT LIKE VLAD HAD...

SHIT. VLAD. I WONDER IF HE... MAYBE HE JUST WENT FOR A WALK, OR...

OH, HE'S OUT IN THE VAN. HE'S FINE.

HE'S PROBABLY READING THE SUNDAY COMICS, WITH A BIG SMILE ON HIS FACE.

HOW'S THE JERK DOING?!

NOT GOOD... IT'S A PRETTY RAGGED WOUND...

THE SHOCK OF THE INJURY ALONE MIGHT KILL HIM AT THIS POINT.

IF I CAN CLOSE OFF THIS...

GHYAH!

GOD DAMN IT! I'VE BEEN DOING MORE WORK ON PEOPLE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS THAN ANIMALS! *THIS. IS. FUCKED. UP!*

YES. FUCKED UP.

THE ANIMAL SLAVES YOU KEEP IN THESE CAGES... THEY DID NOT RAISE ONE NOISE TO ALERT YOU OF ME. THEY FEAR ME, AND HAVE NO LOVE FOR YOU.

THE LOWBEAST ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD NOT TELL ME THE LOCATION OF THE HATED CASSANDRA HACK, NO MATTER WHAT THREATS I MADE.

POOCH?!

LOYAL, THAT ONE IS, EVEN TO HIS ENEMIES, WHEN THE ENEMY IS A FRIEND TO HIS MASTERS.

I SEE YOU ARE A HEALER. I WILL NOT GO BACK TO NEF MISSING A TUSK, ESPECIALLY NOT DUE TO A FIGHT WITH A LOW-BEAST.

YOU WILL PUT IT BACK, AND I WILL GIVE YOU A FAST DEATH, HEALER.

BUT... I DON'T...

NOW, HEALER.

MY JOURNEY HAS ONLY BEGUN, AND I ASSUME IT WILL TAKE HOURS OF TORTURE TO DISCOVER THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE HATED FROM YOUR WILD-HAIRED MATE.

THAT LIL' FAG IS *NOT* HER MATE!

SPLUTCH!!!

UGLY BITCH... TORE OFF MY GODDAMN ARM...

RREEEOOOORRRRKKK!!!

UHN... FUH...

CHRIS! CLOSE THIS GODDAMN DOOR.

DO IIII--

UGHK!

GHUH!

SLAM!

GHRAAAHHHHHHOOORK!

TURN. ON. THLH. GATTH!!!

I... IT'LL *KILL YOU!* IT'S A *GAS CHAMBER,* MAN!

AHH!

KRSSH!

I WILL SKIN YOU NEXT!

KLICK

SSSS

POTTS CAMP

HUWUH?

HEY. HOW'D YOU SLEEP?

HURM. BAD.

SORRY BIG GUY. MARGARET AND I REALLY HAD TO TALK.

HURM. YES. TALK. WHERE IS "MARGARET"?

STILL SLEEPIN'.

IT'S JUST... ALL WE DO IS... WELL, WE JUST *SUFFER.*

WE NEVER GET ANY FARTHER AHEAD. THERE'S ALWAYS A NEW SLASHER TO KILL, ALWAYS SOME NEW BUNCH OF SCREAMING FOOLS. ARE WE GETTING ANY CLOSER TO ENDING THIS SHIT?

WHERE DOES THIS END FOR *US*, VLAD?

...

I'VE BEEN THINKING. ABOUT YOU AND ME. AND THIS LIFE WE'VE BEEN LIVING. AND, Y'KNOW, MAYBE... MAYBE IT'S NOT THE BEST.

HURR?

IT ENDS FOR ME WHEN *YOU* DO NOT NEED ME ANY-MORE.

LAUREL, MONTANA.

ISN'T YOUR SHIFT OVER FOR THE NIGHT, OFFICER HAZLEWOOD?

YOU BET IT IS, CHIEF.

BUT I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOME STUFF BEFORE I HIT THE HAY.

SPEAK YOUR MIND.

HAD A BIT OF A SLOW NIGHT LAST NIGHT, SO I WAS WORKING A FEW CASES OFF THE BOARD. STARTED LOOKING INTO SOME OF THE STUFF WE TOOK DOWN FROM ***MRS. JOWORSKI***...

NOW, DON'T YOU GO GET CAUGHT UP IN ALL THAT. YOU KNOW I'VE JUST BEEN HUMORING THAT WOMAN FOR THE PAST TWENTY YEARS 'CAUSE FRANK JOWORSKI IS SUCH A DECORATED VETERAN OF THE FORCE.

I KNOW, I KNOW. HELL, I WAS THERE WHEN SHE FINGERED THE GREAT WHITE BUFFALO FOR MIMI JOHNSON'S MURDERER.

BUT I PUT IN THAT CALL DOWN TO FLORIDA LIKE I SAID. A GIRL MATCHING THE DESCRIPTION SHE GAVE ***WAS*** BLUDGEONED TO DEATH IN AN UNSOLVED MURDER CASE. SHE GOT THE DATE RIGHT, TOO.

THEN, THERE WERE A FEW MORE MURDERS AS WELL AS A MAJOR FIRE IN THE SAME WEEK. ALL MENTIONED IN MUFFY'S VISION.

SO, WHAT'S TO SAY SHE DON'T JUST SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON CNN AND THE INTERNET?

SURE, GOTHY WHITE GIRL. COULDA GOTTEN 'EM FROM ONE OF THOSE SUICIDE GIR_ SITES FOR ALL WE KNOW.

RIGHT, I THOUGHT THAT, TOO. BUT, MRS. JOWORSKI SUPPLIED US WITH SOME PHOTOS OF WHOM SHE BELIEVES TO BE THE KILLER... THIS "CASSIE HACK" PERSON.

I RAN HER THROUGH A COUPLE OF PLACES... TURNS OUT SHE WAS INVOLVED IN A SERIAL MURDER CASE IN CHIPPEWA FALLS, WISCONSIN. HER MOTHER WAS THE INFAMOUS *LUNCH LADY* KILLER.

I HEARD OF IT. STILL, YOU AND I BOTH KNOW HOW MUFFY LIKES TO READ ALL THAT CHARLIE MANSON/ JOHN WAYNE GACY SERIAL KILLER SHIT.

I DO. BUT, I RAN THROUGH THE RECORDS FOR CHIPPEWA FALLS, AND FOUND OUT MRS. HACK'S BODY WENT MISSING FROM THE CEMETERY ABOUT A WEEK AGO.

BUT, IT *DIDN'T* DISAPPEAR. SEEMS IT SHOWED UP IN A RESTAURANT FIRE IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO. IDENTIFIED BY THE DENTAL RECORDS.

FOUND TWO OTHER BODIES THERE. ONE IDENTIFIED AS THE CHEF, THE OTHER CURRENTLY UNIDENTIFIED.

THERE WAS A WITNESS TO THIS WHOLE THING: A TERRIFIED WOMAN, NEARLY CRAZY WITH FEAR. NAME'S *CONCHITA IZQUERIDO.*

FROM THE WITNESS DESCRIPTION, THEY CAME UP WITH A SKETCH OF THEIR "PERSON OF INTEREST".

SHE LOOK FAMILIAR TO YOU?

EMINENCE.

LISA'S ACTING REALLY STRONG. NOT A TEAR.

BUT I KNOW. YOU CAN'T SPEND THAT LONG LOVING SOMEONE TO NOT BE TOTALLY DESTROYED AT WATCHING THEM DIE. EVEN IF KYLE WAS A TOTAL FUCKING JERK.

EVEN IF HE WAS INADVERTENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF AN INNOCENT GUY. A GUY HE BURIED IN THIS VERY FIELD, WITH ALL THE UNWANTED ANIMALS FROM THE SHELTER.

HE DIDN'T DESERVE TO HAVE TO GET CAUGHT UP IN ALL THIS. FOR ME TO HAVE TO... KILL HIM.

...OR **THIS.**

BUT WE HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO BRING US ALL TOGETHER NOW. A NEW **SECRET.** A NEW **THREAT.**

AND A NEWFOUND **RESPECT.**

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S WEIRDLY FUCKING APROPOS THAT WE HAVE TO HIDE HIM UP HERE... I JUST KNOW THAT THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED...

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.

SANTA FE POLICE DEPARTMENT MORGUE.

BELFIORE! YOU AWAKE THERE?

HYHUH!

WHAT WERE YOU DOING? WAITING TO SEE IF SHE'D MOVE?

THAT IS ONE VERY DEAD CORPSE, BELFIORE. DUG OUT OF A GRAVE, BROUGHT TO A DINER, AND THEN BURNED. *VERY* DEAD.

OH, EHH, EMM... YES, I WAS JUST... WELL, *THINKING*, YOU KNOW? LONG SHIFT AND ALL.

I GUESS. HEAD HOME, WILL YA? YOU'RE CREEPING ME OUT.

PAOLO BELFIORE. THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD. UNMARRIED. NO CHILDREN.

*CONTRACTOR. NOT A MEMBER. A MAN OF SCIENCE AND FINANCES. NOT FAITH. PROBABLY THINKS HE'S WORKING FOR A PHARMACEUTICAL CORPORATION. REPORTED TO SOCIETY THIRTEEN HOURS AGO CONCERNING THE RECEIPT OF A CORPSE. THAT OF ONE **DELILAH HACK**. INTENDED TO RECORD DATA CONCERNING STATUS OF THE BODY AND RECEIVE A MONETARY RESTITUTION.*

NOT A FANATIC. NOT A BELIEVER.

GHYAH!

COME. TALK WITH ME.

TELL *ME* WHAT YOU WERE ABOUT TO TELL *THEM*.

TO BE CONTINUED...

JACKSON POLICE DEPARTMENT, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI.

WOMEN'S HOLDING CELL.

NOW.

WAIT, SO YOU TURNED *YOURSELF* IN?

WELL...

...NOT *EXACTLY.*

POTTS CAMP POLICE DEPARTMENT.

THREE HOURS, 12 MINUTES AGO.

HI! I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD POSSIBLY SPEAK TO ONE OF YOUR DETECTIVES.

I HAVE SOME REALLY INTERESTING INFORMATION, AND I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT THE BEST WAY TO... Y'KNOW... SHARE IT.

OKAY. I'LL NEED YOU TO FILL OUT A FORM. YOUR NAME?

WANTED BY THE FBI

CASSANDRA "CASSIE" HACK

CASSIE. CASSIE HACK.

WANTED BY THE FBI

CASSANDRA "CASSIE" HACK

HERE YA GO.

=AHEM=

MS. HACK. ARE YOU AWARE THAT YOU'RE CONSIDERED A SUSPECT IN A MULTIPLE HOMICIDE CASE AND THE UNAUTHORIZED REMOVAL OF A DEAD BODY BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES?

CASSANDRA "CASSIE" HACK

FUCK ME RUNNING.

MS. HACK... IF WE CAN JUST ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS. THIS JUST CAME IN THIS MORNING AND...

NO... NO WAY.

LOOK, WE'VE GOT ENOUGH TO HOLD YOU. YOU CAN HAVE A CALL AND A LAWYER, JUST DON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID...

SO I DID SOMETHING *STUPID.*

YOU WENT TO GO TALK TO THE POLICE, BUT YA DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO SEE IF THERE MIGHT BE A WARRANT OUT FOR YOUR ARREST? THAT *IS* STUPID.

WHAT WERE YOU THINKIN', HONEY?

I-I *WASN'T* THINKING. I HAD... THINGS ON MY MIND.

THINGS? HEH. I'VE SEEN *THAT* LOOK BEFORE, SWEETHEART.

YOU GOT SOME *MAN* ON YOUR MIND.

NOT *EXACTLY.*

MEANWHILE.

WE'LL HAVE IT READY TOMORROW AT THE EARLIEST, MA'AM.

JACKSON
GAS AND GO

GREAT. WE'LL BE BACK TO PICK IT UP.

HEY, VLAD... UHM... WHEN WE COME TO GET MY CAR, I MIGHT HAVE TO BORROW SOME CASH.

YES. TAKE WHAT I HAVE LEFT.

THANKS BIG GUY. ALL THIS RUNNING AROUND THE COUNTRY FOLLOWING YOU TWO PRETTY MUCH BUSTED MY BANK.

YES. HURRM. WELL, THAT IS OVER NOW, YES?

VLAD, LOOK. CASSIE HASN'T CALLED FOR US TO PICK HER UP, YET. HOW ABOUT YOU AND ME HIT THIS RESTAURANT, AND WE'LL USE THE CHANGE TO GET US SOME PIE AND COFFEE.

I DO NOT LIKE COFFEE.

A MILKSHAKE THEN?

HURRM.

I KNOW THIS MUST SEEM LIKE IT TOTALLY CAME OUT OF *NOWHERE.*

BUT, I GUESS CASSIE JUST CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE... ALL THE *DEATH* AND THE *BLOOD.* NOT HAVING A LIFE. AND THEN ALL THAT STUFF WITH HER DAD... IT JUST...

SHE REALLY WANTED TO CHANGE, Y'KNOW?

HURRM.

SHE WANTS TO CHANGE BECAUSE YOU MADE SEX WITH HER.

NO... THAT'S NOT... WAIT, WE *DIDN'T...*

=AHEM= HAVE SEX.

WE JUST... WELL, LOOK, VLAD HONEY, THAT'S NOT THE POINT...

BEFORE *YOU*, THERE WAS ONLY ME AND CASSIE. AND THEN WHEN SHE MET YOU, IT WAS ME, CASSIE AND *YOU* ON THE *PHONE.*

IT WAS I WHO CALLED YOU TO COMFORT SAD CASSIE. YOU CAME WHEN SHE WOULD NOT SPEAK TO ME. YOU CAME WHEN SHE NEEDED SOMEONE.

IT IS MY FAULT THAT SHE WANTS TO RUN AWAY TO BE WITH YOU AND KISS AND TALK AND LAUGH. YOU CAN DO ALL THE THINGS FOR HER. AND NOW I WILL BE ALONE AGAIN. TO LIVE IN BASEMENT. BUT NO ONE IS GUILTY BUT ME.

NO! I DIDN'T TRY TO STEAL HER... VLAD, I DON'T EVEN *KNOW* WHAT I FEEL ABOUT HER. IT'S CONFUSING AS HELL...

BUT, IF SHE WANTS TO STOP *THIS* LIFE, IT'S UP TO US TO HELP HER DO IT. *WE'RE* HER FRIENDS.

YOU ARE HER FRIEND. I AM JUST *MUSCLE* WITH A SHARP KNIFE.

VLAD! WAIT! PLEASE...

STOP! NO MORE PLEASES AND HOW CAN I HELPS!

ALWAYS YOU ARE SWEET AND KIND! ALWAYS YOU ARE YOUNG AND PRETTY AND SEXY! ALWAYS YOU ARE THERE! WITH YOU AROUND, VLAD IS NEVER GOOD ENOUGH!

BEEP BEEP

BEEP BEEP

YES, THIS IS VLAD. WHO IS SPEAKING, YES?

VLAD, I AM IN SOME DEEP SHIT.

LAUREL, MONTANA.

I BEEN TELLING YOU SHE HAD *THE GIFT* FOR TWENTY YEARS, MIKE.

ALL OF MUFFY'S VISIONS, THEY ALL LINED UP WITH A COLD CASE.

THAT YOU DID, FRANK. GUESS YOU AIN'T AS FULL OF SHIT AS I ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE.

HAZELWOOD MANAGED TO STRING A WHOLE BUNCH OF THE CASES TOGETHER. F.B.I. JOINED IN AND SPREAD AN ***ALL-STATES BULLETIN*** FOR US.

WISH MUFF WAS FEELING GOOD ENOUGH TO HEAR YA SAY IT. ALL THOSE VISIONS TOOK A TOLL ON HER. SHE'S HARDLY BEEN AWAKE AT ALL IN THE PAST TWO DAYS.

I'M GONNA RUN HER SOME SOUP. BE BACK IN A SECOND.

MUFF? YOU AWAKE? GOT SOME FOOD FOR--

HEY FRANK! LOOK WHAT I DID!

MUFF?

MISSISSIPPI.

MY LORD! NEVER IN ALL MY YEARS AS A PUBLIC DEFENDER HAVE I SEEN SUCH, EXCUSE MY LANGUAGE, SUCH *BULLSHIT.*

THESE BACK WOOD HICK COPS... THEY USED A *PSYCHIC*, OF ALL THINGS, TO LINK YOU TO SEVERAL *MURDER SCENES.*

A *PSYCHIC!* I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY DO IT UP NORTH, BUT HERE IN MISSISSIPPI WE DON'T BELIEVE IN SUCH SUPERSTITIOUS SORCERY!

THEY'VE GOT YOU FOR FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, AND THEY'RE MOVING YOU TO RAYMOND DETENTION FOR TONIGHT.

BUT WE'LL HAVE YOU OUT AFTER THAT. I JUST CAN'T SEE THEM MAKING THIS STICK.

SINCE WHEN DO THE DREAMS OF AN OLD WOMAN IN *MONTANA* MAKE FOR SOLID EVIDENCE?

DREAMS?!

YOU'VE GOT FIFTEEN MINUTES HERE. ENJOY.

VLAD.

CASSANDRA.

THE LITTLE BALD GUY JUST TOLD ME THAT THERE'S A WOMAN IN MONTANA WHO *DREAMED* THAT I COMMITTED ALL THESE CRIMES.

AND I DREAMED LAST NIGHT OF COLORFUL ACTION MEN TRYING TO KILL ME. ALSO, LITTLE, ANGRY DAIRY MEN.

ASHLEY GUTHRIE.

ASHLEY GUTHRIE.

YOU'RE GETTING *REALLY GOOD* AT THIS.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

Many sorries, my Master, for your broken house-hole.

CONSIDERING YOU ***SAVED OUR ASSES***, I'M SURE LISA WILL LET THIS ONE GO.

HELL, AFTER ***THAT***, I'M PRETTY SURE SHE'LL LOOK THE OTHER WAY THE NEXT TIME YOU DECIDE TO DRY HUMP ONE OF HER CASHMERE SWEATERS.

So soft on my penis.

AND PEOPLE WONDER WHAT DOGS WOULD SAY IF THEY COULD TALK.

HEY, IXNAY ON THE ALKTAY, EH?

Bark Bark. I Shall.

HI. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

HI THERE.

I'M ***CAPTAIN REILLY***. MAGGIE. I TRANSFERRED FROM INDIANAPOLIS... MIGHT BE TAKING THE SHERIFF JOB HERE IN EMINENCE.

I'M IMPRESSED.

DON'T BE. THE TWO OFFICERS WITH SENIORITY HERE DIDN'T WANT IT. SAID IT WAS BAD LUCK TO BE SHERIFF IN THIS COUNTY.

SEEMS THEY HAVE A HISTORY OF GRUESOME, VIOLENT DEATHS. EFFED UP, RIGHT?

ANYWHO, I WAS FOLLOWING UP ON SOME OF THE THINGS SHERIFF HOYNE WAS WORKING ON BEFORE THE... *ACCIDENT.*

RIGHT BEFORE HE WENT OFF THE ROAD, HE CHECKED IN WITH A *KYLE BELL* IN HIS CAR. BELL HAD BEEN HERE, AT *THIS HOUSE.* *TRESPASSING.*

BUT HE WASN'T IN THE CAR WHEN EMTs GOT THERE. WAS WONDERING IF MAYBE *YOU'D* HEARD FROM HIM.

NOPE. JEEZ... I DO HOPE YOU FIND HIM THOUGH. I DIDN'T LIKE THE GUY MUCH... BUT, MAN, WANDERING AROUND AFTER AN ACCIDENT LIKE THAT...

Ahem. Bark. Bark.

YEAH. JEESH. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HOUSE?

AH... Y'KNOW. THE USUAL. *GIANT ALIEN ATTACK.*

HEH. GOTCHA.

WELL, IF YOU HEAR ANYTHING FROM BELL, GIMME A CALL.

WILL DO. I MEAN, I'D RATHER HAVE HIM SNEAKING AROUND MY YARD, THEN, Y'KNOW, *DEAD.*

GOOD TO MEET YOU...

CHRIS. KRANK. *CHRIS KRANK.*

WELL, YOU GET BACK TO THAT HOUSEWORK, MR. KRANK. AND HEY... WATCH OUT FOR *MECHA-GODZILLA.*

HA.

Master? Did my impersonation of an earth-dog suffice?

YEAH... SURE, POOCH. SHE DIDN'T SUSPECT A THING.

RAYMOND, MISSISSIPPI.
COUNTY HIGHWAY 18.

20 MILES OUTSIDE JACKSON.

KINDA SAD, ISN'T IT?

WHAT'S THAT?

WELL, YOU ALWAYS HEAR THESE GOTH KIDS DEFENDING THEIR LIFESTYLE.

"WEARING ALL BLACK DOESN'T MAKE US EVIL. LISTENING TO DEVIL MUSIC DOESN'T MAKE US MURDERERS."

"BUT, THIS GIRL, THIS CASSIE HACK. KINDA PROVES THE STEREOTYPE, DOESN'T SHE?"

YOU SOUND LIKE AN OLD WOMAN.

PAF!

AND THAT'S COMING FROM AN OLD--

BILL?

PAF!

GUK!

TINK!

SONOVAWHORE.

AHAAAAAANNNNNGK.

GODDAMMIT. ISN'T GETTING SENT TO JAIL ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY?

SHRAKCH!

ALRIGHT. I'M CUFFED AND I'VE HAD A *REALLY* SHITTY DAY.

DO. YOUR. WORS--

FIKK!

...SSSSSSTTT...

=WHUH=

FOREST. SMELL OF BURNING WOOD.

VINTAGE EIGHTEES CAMP COUNSELOR UNIFORM. EXPERTLY TRIMMED TO BE MORE PROVOCATIVE.

ALCOHOL. DRUGS. CONDOMS FOR THAT PREMARITAL SEX... PORN. AND SOME **REALLY** BIG PLASTIC DICKS.

I KNOW WHAT THIS IS. I'VE DONE THIS BEFORE.

I'M **SLASHER BAIT.**

CAMP COUNSELOR

BEER

LO-CAL LO-CARB HIGH TASTE!!

AND I'M NOT ALONE.

CASSANDRA HACK. YOU STAND ACCUSED BY THE *SOCIETY OF THE BLACK LAMP.*

YOU HAVE SLAIN OUR *PALADINS*, AND EXTINGUISHED THE DARK FLAME THAT LIGHTS THEIR WAY AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE.

YOU ARE AN *ABOMINATION.* AND SO YOU WILL BE EXECUTED AS A *DAUGHTER OF DIONYSUS.*

UCK YUH, SUH-BREENA.

SHUNKK!

LEGS. FREE?

HELL. YES.

CAMP COUNSELOR

CAMP COUNSELOR

RUUUH!!

KRAK!

STO-- OOHF!

AAIIIGGH!

FWOOSH!

SHE'S ON FIRE! GET WATER! NOW!

RRRRRRGG!

WHORE! IT'S NOT ENOUGH YOU HAVE TO RUIN EVERYTHING WE'VE WORKED FOR?!

WOP!

NUH UH.

AAGHGH! PUT IT OUT!

AMATEURS. ALL OF THEM. THEY'RE NOT USED TO FIGHTING WITH THOSE KNIVES.

PROBABLY GOTTEN USED TO ALL THEIR VICTIMS BEING TIED UP AND HELPLESS. THEY'VE ALL GOT DESK JOBS I BET. NEVER BEEN IN A FIGHT.

I'M GOOD FOR A DIRTY FIGHT. BUT I'M STILL CUFFED. AND I CAN STILL FEEL THE FUZZ FROM WHATEVER DRUGS THEY POPPED ME WITH.

DAMMIT! I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD HAVE LEFT HER TO ROT IN JAIL!

BILL, YOU ASSHOLE... QUIT COMPLAINING AND GET--

KRSSH!

HRRA!

FOR FUCK'S SAKE! NEXT TIME, WE AT LEAST NEED GUNS!

NEED ANOTHER BOTTLE, COME ON... BOTTLE...

...OR GIANT RUBBER MAN-WAND. WHATEVER WORKS, I GUESS.

BITCH OF BACCHUS! I CLAIM YOUR BLOOD!

AND I CLAIM THIS ASSHOLE'S FANCY KNIFE.

AAAAARRRGH!

WHICH I GIVE TO YOU.

SHIT. STILL WOOZY FROM THE DART. CAN'T LET THE ADRENALIN WEAR OFF... OR... I'M...

FUCKED.

AAAHHH!

GET HER!

GRAH!

CAMP
COUNS

NORMALLY, WE'D JUST SLIT YOUR THROAT, BUT I THINK WE'RE GOING TO MAKE THIS ONE NICE AND *SLOW* AND *PAINFUL*, RIGHT?

WHAT HURTS MORE? GUTTIN' HER? OR CUTTIN' HER EYES OUT?

DO HER STOMACH... SHE CAN WATCH HER INSIDES SPILL OUT.

NOW... I'M GONNA MESS UP THAT PRETTY FACE...

KKKCH!

SLICH!

SAM... *SAMHAIN*...

SHUNK!

NO... SAMHAIN...

SSSHHHHHH.

KLAK

CAMP COUNSELOR

UHNN... WHAT... WHAT THE...? WHO ARE Y--

OH. NO... NOT NOW...

SOOO--

I

CAN'T

PASS

OU--

CAMP COUNSELOR

AUUGH

UNNGGH...

OH, FUCK YOU! NOT YOU... NOT *YOU*...

AHH!

ALICE.

N-NO.

WHY THE RITUAL FOR THIS GIRL?

SHE DESTROYS THE *PREPARERS*. THE OTHERS L-LIKE *YOU*.

FWUMP

YOU KNOW HOW THIS MUST CONCLUDE.

YES. LIVE BY THE L-LAMP...

Splash

Splash

NOT LIKE ME.

DIE BY THE LAMP.

AAAIIIEEEE!?

TO BE CONTINUED...

MIND KILLER

HACK/SLASH #77A by TIM SEELEY & WES DZIOBA

THEN.*

NOW I'M *REALLY* MAD! WHO WANTS--?

*SEE HACK/SLASH VOLUME 2: DEATH BY SEQUEL

SHUNKK!

OWW!

EMILY! VLAD SAYS YOU HAVE A LIGHTER...

YOU'RE DEAD, HACK!

CAN'T THINK CLEAR FOR L-LONG...

THIS WOULD **NEVER** HAPPEN IF I WERE IN MY DREAM WORLD. I'M THE BOSS THERE. I CAN DO **WHATEVER** I WANT.

THOSE STUPID SLASHER GUYS WEREN'T AS GOOD AS MY TOYS. CASSIE KEPT KILLING 'EM!

CASSIE, YOUR DUMB **MOM** ALMOST KILLED ME ONCE, BUT I CAME BACK.

GETTING MY HEAD STUCK TO A WALL AIN'T GONNA STOP ME. I'LL GET THE KNIFE OUT...

PAR... FOR THE COURSE...

SHUNK

...AND I'LL KILL YOU...

FOR REALLY REAL THIS TIME.

WHA-KOOM!

THAT WAS REALLY HOT.

OH. OH! I REMEMBER THIS PLACE. I'M... I'M... AHUH... HUNH... =SOB=

I'M DEAD AGAIN.

MOOMMMMMYYYYYY!

HEY, WHO LET KIDS IN HERE!?

NOW.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

TAKKA TAKKA TAKKA

CRUNCH

AWWW, POOCH!

Mmm. It is like sucking sweet milk from a cold, crunchy teat.

FEELING BETTER, I TAKE IT?

Yes, master. And strangely, Pooch now finds he enjoys frozen treats more after his swim in miserable frozen river.

What is Master doing? There are no naked human females on the glowing box.

WELL, WHEN YOUR "MOST HATED" CASSIE GOT SENT TO JAIL, I REALIZED WE HAD NO WAY OF GETTING INFORMATION FROM HER DIRECTLY.

I THOUGHT WE SHOULD START BUILDING A DATABASE NETWORK IN CASE THAT EVER HAPPENED AGAIN. YOU KNOW, EVERY FRIEND, EVERY ENEMY... ALL AT THE CLICK OF A BUTTON.

HACKSLASH INC.

Ally Name:
Chris Krank

Primary Specialties:
Intelligence. Action Figures.

Current Mood:
Committed.

WE LIVE A PRETTY CRAZY LIFE. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN *SOMEONE ELSE* MIGHT HAVE TO TAKE OVER.

ELSEWHERE.

WUUUHHH?

YOU AWAKEN.

WHO... WHOO URR YOOO?

PLEASE DEPOSIT THIRTY-FIVE CENTS TO MAKE A CALL.

MNUUUHHH.

Ally Name:
Cassandra
"Cassie" Hack

Primary
Specialties:
Decapitation.
Evisceration.
Well-timed
one-liners.

Current Mood:
Groggy.

US ROUTE 310.

NEAR BRIDGER, MONTANA.

CASSIE'S AWAKE!

HRMM. SHE HAS SLEPT VERY LONG. SEE THAT SHE IS OKAY.

GHAH! WHAT THE FUUUUCK...!?

WOMAN, WE WEREN'T SURE IF YOU'D *EVER* WAKE UP.

HOW LONG WAS I OUT?

UM... LIKE *TWO DAYS.*

TWO *DAYS?!*

YEAH. YOU CALLED US FROM A TRUCK STOP. WHEN WE CAME TO GET YOU, YOU WERE IN THIS WEIRD OUTFIT AND ACTING LIKE YOU WERE REALLY STONED.

YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT *SAMHAIN*, AND THEN YOU PASSED OUT.

SAMHAIN...

I WASN'T SURE IF YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE HOLIDAY OR THE OLD DANZIG BAND.

UNH... WHERE ARE WE NOW?

US 310

NEXT EXIT BRIDGER

AFTER WE VISITED YOU AT THE JAIL, VLAD AND I DID SOME RESEARCH.

WE FOUND THIS LADY WHO SAW YOU IN ALL HER "PSYCHIC" VISIONS. HER NAME'S MARTHA JOWORSKI. SHE LIVES IN LAUREL, MONTANA.

SINCE WE KNOW THE TEDDY BEAR KID IS INVOLVED, WE'RE HEADING THERE NOW.

Ally Name:
Margaret Crump

Known aliases:
Georgia Peaches

Primary Specialties:
Thespian.

Current mood:
Relieved.

"I TRIED TO QUIT, BUT THEY JUST KEPT PULLING ME BACK IN."

HEH. GOING OUT WITH A BANG, THEN?

WE'LL TALK LATER ABOUT HOW YOU GOT OUT OF JAIL AND WHY YOU ENDED UP IN THE WOODS WITH DANZIG... BUT FIRST, YOU SHOULD RELAX, DRINK SOME WATER.

YEAH. MARGARET...

...I'M REALLY GLAD TO SEE YOU.

HRRRM.

NOW CASSIE DOES NOT JUST TALK TO GEORGIA ON THE PHONE. NOW GEORGIA IS ALWAYS HERE. NOW CASSIE IS ALWAYS KISSING HER AND TOUCHING HER.

Ally Name:
Vlad

Primary Specialties:
Meat carving.
Combat nurse.
Inadvertently humorous one-liners.

Current mood:
Covetous.

HRM. MAYBE I WOULD FEEL LESS ANGRY IF I HAD SOMEONE TO KISS AND TOUCH AS WELL.

SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD THE SEX... WITH... ME...

Ally Name:
Gertrude Hall.

Primary Specialties:
Band support.
Roadie persuasion.
Rusty trombone.

Current mood:
Distressed.

LAUREL, MONTANA.

THE HOME OF FRANK AND MUFFY JOWORSKI.

WHEN DID SHE GET LIKE *THIS?*

SHE WAS ACTIN' ALL CRAZY... KINDA *CHILDISH...*

FRANK CALLED ME ABOUT THREE HOURS AGO. MUFF HAD JUST COLLAPSED, EYES WIDE OPEN.

SHE'S BEEN UNDER A LOT OF STRESS WITH THIS CASE SHE'S WORKING ON. ALMOST LIKE SHE GOT SO *SCARED* OF THE WORLD SHE SAW...

...SHE ESCAPED DOWN INTO HER OWN PLACE.

WHAT'S WRONG, GRANNY?! ARE YOU SCARED?

DON'T WORRY. I *LIKE* YOU, GRANNY. YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO CAN HEAR AND SEE THINGS OTHER PEOPLE CAN'T.

A *WAKING* DREAMER.

THAT MEANS YOU COULD HEAR ME *ANYTIME.* I COULD HEAR YOU, TOO. AND ONCE I FOUND YA, I COULD CRAWL RIGHT INTO YOUR *DREAMS.*

AND MAKE YOU SEE WHATEVER I WANTED YOU TO SEE.

AFTER A WHILE I EVEN FIGURED OUT TO TAKE OVER AND MOVE YOU AROUND. LIKE A TOY. *COOL,* HUH?

DUDE... IT'S *HERE!* I CAN FUCKING FEEL MY *GUITAR,* MAN!

SWEET.

WAIT... FUH-- THERE'S SOMETHIN' *ELSE.*

AHHH!

ASH!

SHE... SHE GOT OUT, MAN. THEY COULDN'T HOLD HER DOWN IN MISSISSIPPI.

YOU GOTTA TELL THE COPS, DUDE.

CASSIE HACK IS *HERE.*

HIGHWAY THREE-TEN. NEAR BRIDGER.

BRING *LOTS* OF POLICE.

OKAY, ASSUMING I'M NOT STILL DRUGGED AND SLEEPING, AND THIS ISN'T A WEIRD *HALLUCINATION...*

...WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

MY CAR BROKE DOWN...

DON'T *PLAY* WITH ME, GERTRUDE. *WHY* DID YOU COME *HERE?*

I... WELL, SEE, I HAD THIS *DREAM...*

Gertrude Hall. You are the greatest fan to ever live. Thus, it falls upon you to deliver the guitar of famed rocker Six Sixx to us, the Gods of Metal.

WHERE OZZY, WHERE? NEW YORK? L.A.? LONDON?

No, Gertrude. We need you to go to the most rocking place of all.

Montana.

WE TOLD YOU TO DESTROY THAT GUITAR, GERTRUDE!

YEAH... I KNOW... I *MEANT* TO...

BUT, I KINDA WANTED TO KEEP IT... AS A *SOUVENIR.* OF *VLAD.*

HRRM. THAT IS UNDERSTANDABLE.

YEAH, ABOUT AS UNDERSTANDABLE AS FOLLOWING AN *OZZY-DREAM* ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

DREAMS AND TOYS, THAT'S *ASHLEY.* AND THE GUITAR MEANS *SIX SIXX.*

THERE'S SOMETHING ROTTEN GOING ON.

UNLOCK THE TRUNK, GERTRUDE. I'M DESTROYING THE GUITAR. RIGHT *NOW*, BEFORE IT GETS *WORSE.*

NO... NO WAY.

ALL KINDS OF WEIRD SHIT HAPPENS. YOU KNOW. *YOU'VE* SEEN IT.

I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE WORSHIPPING ROCK STARS. WHAT IF THEY REALLY *DID* CHOOSE *ME?*

THEY DIDN'T. *MOVE.*

YOU DON'T GET IT! I'M THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD. I'M NOT AS HOT AS I USED TO BE. THIS... THIS COULD BE MY *LAST CHANCE.*

I'M **NOT** GETTING US ALL KILLED BECAUSE **YOU** THINK YOU MIGHT GET TO BE SOME ASSHOLE'S **ROCK OF LOVE.** MOVE, GERT--

POK!

I SAID NO!

YOU BIG-HAIRED DUMPSTER SLUT!

CAMP COUNSELOR

CASSANDRA!

NO! DON'T!
OW!
SHE HIT GEORGIA. LET ME GO, VLAD!
THERE IS NO NEED TO FIGHT! WE WILL SORT THIS OUT!
IF CASSIE SAYS THE GUITAR'S GOTTA GO, IT'S GOTTA GO!
GET OFF ME, BITCH!
AAAGH!
GET OFF!
GEORGIA!
NO. YOU MUST NOT FIGHT GERTRUDE. WE NEED TO STOP THIS...
RIGHT, LIKE YOU'RE REAL IMPARTIAL, ASSHOLE. YOU FUCKED GERTRUDE...
BUT...
BUT, YOU...

SIGH

HUH?

NO.

MORE.

FIGHTING.

WE KNOW THERE IS SOMETHING GOING ON HERE. WE ARE BEING PLAYED WITH, AND IT IS NOT A MATTER FOR *LAUGHY GAMES!*

WE NEED TO THINK CLEAR! IT DOES *NOT* MATTER *WHO* HAS MADE THE SEX WITH *WHO!*

WE HAVE NO TIME TO ACT AS *MONKEYS!*

SOMEONE IS TRYING TO MAKE SURE WE ARE ALL VERY MUCH--

ALL OF YOU FREEZE!

FUCK-ASSED.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR AIDING AND ABETTING A KNOWN FUGITIVE.

PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM!

THEY GOT 'ER.

HER AND THREE ACCOMPLICES... RIGHT ON THREE-TEN LIKE YOU SAID, MUFFY.

SWEET! DID THEY FIND MR. SIXX'S TOTALLY ***SWEET AX?***

AN AX? YOU MEAN A GUITAR?

YEAH, GRANDPA... WE ***NEED*** THE GUITAR.

MUFFY... YOU'RE ACTING ***REALLY*** STRANGE. ARE YOU ***OKAY?***

NO... MAYBE WE SHOULD PULL OVER. I HAVE TO... UM... ***PEE.***

OKAY, I PULLED OVER. WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

HEE HEE. I SAID "PEE".

I'M SO NAUGHTY!

MUFFY! OH GOD! WHAT DID YOU ***DO?!***

SHUT UP, OLD GUY! ***I'M*** DRIVING NOW!

WHAM WHAM WHAM

SO... CASS... THIS IS PROBABLY KINDA LIKE *DEJA VU*, HUH?

WOMEN'S HOLDING

YEAH, WE CAN THANK *UTA FORD* OVER THERE FOR THIS ONE.

ME?! YOU'RE THE ONE WITH HER FACE ON "AMERICA'S MOST WANTED"!

JESUS, GEORGIA, HOW DO YOU EVEN KNOW? MAYBE SHE *DID* DO ALL THAT CRAZY SHIT! MAYBE SHE *WAS* THE PSYCHO ALL ALONG!

LADIES, PLEASE. MS. HACK, I NEED TO MOVE YOU DOWN TO THE MAXIMUM-SECURITY WING NOW...

NO!

IT'S COOL. THE FASTER THEY BOOK ME, THE FASTER THEY'LL LET THE REST OF YOU OUT.

WHAT?

NOTHIN'... JUST... HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU...

YOU'RE *AFRAID* OF ME.

GOOD. DO ME A FAVOR. *DESTROY* THE GUITAR YOU GUYS TOOK AS EVIDENCE.

I DON'T TAKE REQUESTS FROM *YOU.*

NOW, WHEN YOU COME OUT, PLEASE FA--

FRA-KROOOOOM!

THAT WAS *AWWWEEESOME!*

THAT WAS JUST LIKE IN *TERMINATOR!*

OKAY, FRANK... COME ON OUT!

OKAY, POLICEMEN! I WANT THE GUITAR YOU GOT FROM CASSIE HACK'S FRIEND. THE GIRL WITH THE GIANT HAIR.

OR I'LL SHOOT FRANK IN THE FACE, LIKE, A BUNCH OF TIMES!

I... I HAVE IT.

OH MAN, MR. SIXX, YOU DIDN'T TELL ME HOW *COOL* THE GUITAR WAS.

OKAY, RIGHT, YEAH... I KNOW, I KNOW.

QUIT YELLING, MR. SIXX!

HERE GOES NOTHIN'!

BWEEDOOO CHUNG BWEEO!!!

HEY. IT DIDN'T WORK.

OKAY, GEEZ, SORRY. IT'S HARDER TO PLAY IT RIGHT WITH *OLD LADY FINGERS* THAN I THOUGHT IT'D BE.

BWEEDOO BWOW CHUUUUNG!!

AWESOME!

HELLLOOOOOOO MONTANA!

SHRRRAAK!!!

COME ON, STUPID CAMERAS...

I CAN TELL YOU WHAT YOU'RE GONNA SEE.

Y'KNOW THAT SWEET LITTLE OLD PSYCHIC LADY?

THE ONE THAT USED HER ***MENTAL POWERS*** TO TELL YOU WHO KILLED ALL THOSE INNOCENT PEOPLE?

SHE'S HERE TO SHOW JUST HOW BAD YOU GOT PLAYED.

I AM BACK!

OH MAN! CAN I TRY THAT?

I *DID* JUST LET YOU OUT OF HELL.

MAYBE LATER, ASH. RIGHT NOW, I JUST WANT TO TAKE IN THE SIGHTS.

SIX SIXX.

BACK IN BLACK, HACK.

LOOK AT THAT. ALL FOUR OF THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING MY BAND AND SENDING ME TO THE WORST GODDAMN PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE. ALL LOCKED UP WITH NO PLACE TO GO.

CAMP COUNSELOR

MMMM... BEEN A WHILE. WHATDYA SAY, CAS? A LITTLE HATE-FUCK BEFORE I TORTURE YOU, THE SLUTS AND THAT BIG RETARD?

PLEASE. THE ONLY THING YOUR LITTLE ORANGE DICK IS GOOD FOR IS BEING MISTAKEN FOR A CHEE-TOH.

YOU BIT-

BLAM!

BLAM BLAM BLAM!

AHHHHHH!

SHEERRAK!!

NOT THE TOTALLY SWEET AX!

BLAM!

GAH!

WOAH! THAT'S *NOTHING* LIKE SHOOTING A VIDEO GAME GUN. I'M LEARNING A *LOT* TODAY!

FUCK! IT'S TOTALLY *FUBAR!* NOW I CAN'T OPEN, LIKE, TELEPORT GATES OR ANYTHING, MAN!

I FINALLY GET OUT OF *HELL*, BUT NOW I'M STUCK IN *MONTANA!*

YOU MIGHT WANT TO TURN AROUND, SIX...

OH, FUCK ME!

...I DON'T THINK YOU GOT OUT OF HELL ALONE.

HHHSSSSSS

TO BE CONTINUED...

CASSIE.

CASSIE HACK!

CASSIE THE PSYCHO!

LUNCH LADY! LUNCH LADY! LUNCH LADY!

GOD, YOU ARE *SO* GROSS.

SHE'S STILL A FUCKING FREAK. JUST LIKE IN SCHOOL.

YEAH, EVEN THOUGH SHE DRESSES LIKE A *SLUT* NOW.

THAT'S *WHY* SHE DRESSES LIKE SUCH A SLUT.

SHE THINKS IF SHE THROWS OUT SOME SEX, NO ONE WILL NOTICE HOW *PATHETIC* SHE REALLY IS.

CASSIE'S GOT NO DADDY!

CASSIE'S GOT NO DADDY!

HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT HER?

BECAUSE SHE THINKS I'M HER *FRIEND.*

SHE THINKS I COULD ACTUALLY *LOVE* HER.

DESPERATE FREAK!

NO ONE LOVES YOU! NO ONE *COULD!*

NO.

NO.

NO!

RHAAAAAA!

YOU BITCH! YOU FUCKING BITCH!

=HUNH=

=HUNH=

=HUNH=

=HUNH=

SPLUK!!!

SPLOCH!

SPLAP!

OH!

AHHHHHGG!

=HUNH=

=HUNH=

=HUNH=

OH.

LAUREL, MONTANA.

COUNTY POLICE STATION.

HOLDING CELLS.

<THE FEAR IN THIS ONE IS *IMMENSE*. SHE *ALONE* COULD SUSTAIN US FOR A LIFETIME.>

<DRINK DEEPLY AND GROW FAT. THERE IS MUCH MORE SUSTENANCE HERE. AND SO MANY FLAVORS. I WAS GROWING TIRED OF THE SAME MEAL EVERY DAY.>*

*TRANSLATED.

MUFUCKUUUUHHH...

SHIT, MAN. THEY CAME **WITH**. I THOUGHT I FINALLY GOT AWAY FROM 'EM... BUT THE BASTARDS FOLLOWED ME THROUGH THE DOOR.

HEAD HURTS **SO** BAD! MUST HAVE TAKEN US ALL OUT WITH THEIR WEIRD FUCKING MIND-MELTING **HOODOO**.

I'M THE ONLY ONE UP. PROBABLY A LITTLE BIT IMMUNE TO THEIR WHAMMY, SINCE I HAD MY BRAIN CHEWED ON BY THESE UGLY BITCHES FOR THE LAST FEW MONTHS.

FUCK THE REST OF THESE ASS-HOLES. MY ASS NEEDS OUT OF--

GK!

<IT APPEARS THE OLD MEAL AWAKENS...>

<BAH. KILL IT. WITH SO MANY MEALS TO COME, IT SEEMS UNNECESSARY TO WASTE ANY MORE TIME ON IT.>

<SMASH IT'S HEAD. WE WILL ENJOY A COURSE OF RAW FEAR AS IT TRICKLES FROM HIS DYING BRAIN MATTER. THEN, THE BREEDING BEGINS.>

<EXCELLENT.>

JEFFREY BREVARD SIX SIXX.

RAW BRAIN YOURS SUCCULENT FORNICATE ON.

STUPID FUCKIN' THINGS. PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW THEY MAKE SPINNING CHAIRS...

AGHK!

KRAK!

AW, SHIT! =GUH= BROKE MY **FUCKING ARM!**

UHN... BUT, THAT MIGHT HELP ME GET OUT OF THIS HOG TIE...

DOWNSIDE: IT'S REALLY, REALLY GOING TO--

AGGGGGGGGHHH!

YOU ASSHOLE! THAT'S MY FUCKING ***PLAYING ARM!***

IT'S NOT ENOUGH YOU FUCKIN' ***LEECHES*** GOTTA BE IN MY HEAD MAKING ME LIVE THE SCARIEST SHIT MY BRAIN CAN COME UP WITH?!

FUCK YOU!

ASSHOLE! YOU FUCKIN'--

OH...

<GET HIM! DO NOT LET HIM ESCAPE! OR HAVE YOU ALL EATEN SO MUCH THAT YOU'RE FAT AND USELESS?!>

ALWAYS OURS BE YOU JEFFREY BREVARD SIX SIXX.

DRINK YOU FEAR AGONY CASSIE HACK!

SPUT!

SPAK!

AH!

GHK.

AHHHHHHG!

STILL A LITTLE BIT OF KICK IN IT...

FIZT!

HRRRUM!

SZZZRKKK!!!

<NOOOOOOOO!!!>

NEF.

sniff.

We feed.

Be silent.

NO ONE. NO DADDY. LUNCH LADY LUNCH LADY...

AWAY, BEASTS!

GUH.

ARKOVASCAR THE EATER?!

SPUK!

[illegible]

IT APPEARS ARKOVASCAR'S LEGENDARY ABILITIES TO INSPIRE SHEER TERROR AND DRINK OF IT ARE NOT ONLY STORIES.

[illegible]

SILENCE! WE WILL HAVE NO FEAR IN NEF SAVE THAT CREATED BY US/ ME!

FUZZA!

EEEEEEEEEE!

[illegible] ARE. [illegible] EXPLAIN [illegible] YOU CAME [illegible] E OF THE [illegible] EXILES OF [illegible] UNIVERSE, [illegible] OUGHT [illegible] TO OUR [illegible] M!

MUNH. NEF. I'M IN NEF.

NO! NO... IT'S NOT LIKE THAT! CASSIE HACK AND HER FRIENDS USED THE GUITAR TO SEND ME TO SOME OTHER WORLD, MAN.

AND, LIKE, THESE THINGS, I CALLED 'EM ***DREAD DRINKERS***, CUZ, LIKE, I THOUGHT IT'D MAKE A GREAT SONG SOMEDAY, AND THEY MADE ME LIVE ALL THIS SCARY STUFF, AND THEY LIVED OFF IT.

AND WHEN I GOT OUT OF THERE WITH THE HELP OF THIS KID ASHLEY, THEY FOLLOWED ME TO EARTH.

[illegible] OOLISH [illegible] AVATAR. THE [illegible] CASSANDRA [illegible] HER ALLIES [illegible] TO THE EXILE [illegible] THE EATER, [illegible] THAT FEEDS [illegible] THE FEARS [illegible] FE.

[illegible] RVING [illegible] NNIA, IT [illegible] LL, WEAK. [illegible] RLESS.

[illegible] YOU [illegible] IT. AND [illegible] ED YOU TO [illegible] OUR WORLD! [illegible] IND YOU [illegible] BLY DIM, [illegible] TAR!

OH... SHIT. IT ***WANTED*** ME TO FIND ASHLEY. HE CAN GO INTO PEOPLE'S DREAMS...

...THEIR ***NIGHTMARES.***

AND THOUGH I/WE ARE FILLED WITH SURGES OF PLEASURE AT THE THOUGHT OF THE HATED CASSANDRA HACK BEING USED AS AN APPETIZER FOR THE EATER, WE LAMENT AT THE LOSS OF THE ONLY WORLD THAT GIVES US MATES FOR OUR GIFT OF SEED.

NO! WAIT!

GIMME SOME OF YOUR JUICE AGAIN, MAN. Y'KNOW, MAKE ME A ***ROCKSTAR***... AN AVATAR OR WHATEVER.

GIMME A NEW AXE, AND SEND ME BACK. I'LL TAKE OUT THIS EATER MOTHERFUCKER.

WE/I WILL BE WEAK SHOULD WE ASSIST YOU. IN TURN, YOU WILL HAVE TO ASSIST US/ME.

AND YOU WILL BRING US THE HATED CASSANDRA HACK WHOSE ARMY OF FOLLOWERS HAVE REPELLED OUR/MY REPEATED ATTEMPTS AT SATISFACTION AND REVENGE.

AND THEN I/WE SHALL FEAST UPON HER INNARDS. EITHER WAY, I/WE WILL BE PLEASED.

DO IT TO IT.

LAUREL, MONTANA.

<THIS BODY WILL BE A BETTER HOST. IT IS STRONG, AND SUPPLIES SO LITTLE FEAR FOR DRINKING, ANYWAY.>

<WE HAVE SO FEW BODIES NOW. AND EVEN WITH SUCH POTENT DRINK, WE WILL NEED THE DREAMWALKER TO LET US TOUCH EVERY MIND UPON THIS WORLD. THEN OUR NUMBERS WILL BE LEGION.>

<ENOUGH TO BEGIN OUR RAPE OF THIS REALITY AND CONSUME ALL THAT THE ONE HAS CREATED.>

AAAGH!

FFARK!

THIS IS SOME SERIOUS *DROPPED D* TUNING. CAN FEEL THAT RIGHT DOWN TO MY NUTS, MAN! WHEW!

Ally Name:
Jeffrey "Six Sixx" Brevard

Primary Specialties:
Lead Guitar. Singing. Hogging the spotlight.

Current Mood:
Dr. Feelgood

YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A SNACK TO BE CHEWED UP AND SPIT OUT!

DESTROY HIS MIND!

GHUH!

NOT... NOT GONNA WORK, MAN. I'M ALL IMMUNE TO YOUR BRAIN WHAMMY. I GOT... *TOLERANCE.*

TTTTTMM!

YOU GUYS WANNA HEAR THE SONG I WAS WRITING ABOUT YOU?

IT GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

DREAD DRIIINKEERRRS.
FEEDING ON MY FEARS.
DREAD DRIIINKEERRRS.
DELIGHTING IN MY TEARS.

WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE ME BE? WHY CAN'T YOU DIE?

SO WHAT IF ONE OF MY FEARS IS BEING TURNED ON BY SOME GUY?

SHUK!

YOU'RE SIPPING UP ALL THE JUICES, OF THINGS THAT MADE ME COLD.

FROM THE MONSTER IN MY CLOSET TO GROWING ALONE AND OLD.

UGNH!

AAAGHHH!

HUNH.

CHOOM!

BUT, I'M GETTIN' OVER WHAT SCARES ME. THE ONLY SCREAMIN' WILL BE ROCK.

SO LISTEN HERE, DREAD DRINKERS...

ZZRAK!

YOU CAN DRINK MY COCK!

ZZRAK!

PATHETIC THING. FULL OF FEARS. ONLY GOOD AS FUEL.

THUK!

LIKE ALL LIFE. ALWAYS FEAR. FEAR DEATH. FEAR LIFE WORSE.

THUK!

YOU EVEN FEAR THE ONE. THE MAKER OF ALL. FEAR HE WILL REJECT YOUR SOUL...

=UNH= NOT *ME*, MAN...

SHLUK!

GUH. ONLY ONE. ONE NEED SURVIVE. ONLY...

SOLD *MY* SOUL TO THE *DEVIL*.

TUMP!..

SHREEEE!

SQUIRT!

CAMP

ZERO SURVIVE.

OH MAN... WHAT THE HELL...?

HURRM... CASSANDRA?

OH GOD... MY HEAD...

SIX, YOU SELFISH ASSHOLE. STILL MAKING A MESS JUST SO YOU CAN BE THE NEXT GODDAMN AMERICAN IDOL.

THIS IS JUST AS GOOD AS HAVING HER IN THE JAIL CELL. ALL TIED UP AND DELIVERED FOR US!

LET'S KILL HER. LIKE. *REALLY* KILL HER BAD. AND ALL HER FRIENDS SO SHE HAS TO WATCH.

HEEHEHEHEEEEE!

ASHE. LEAVE HER ALONE. SHE'S NOT FOR YOU. I TRADED HER TO THE NEFLORDS. SHE'S THEIRS.

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, *STUPID HEAD?*

JUST MOVE AWAY, ASHE.

HA. WHEN IT'S LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY, I ALWAYS TAKE THE CANDY.

=GHK=

GODAMMIT, ASHLEY!

SHRAK!

I'M NOT GOING WITH YOU. YOU CAN JUST KILL ME. I'M NOT AFRAID OF DEATH.

I KNOW.

YOU CAN'T LEAVE WITH THAT WOMAN!

I GOTTA BE AT LEAST ONE FOR TWO, BABY. BESIDES, THE OLD LADY IS DEAD. HER BODY IS ASHE'S NOW. I'M DOING YOU A FAVOR BY TAKING HIM.

WHERE DO YOU THINK *YOU'RE* GOIN'?

YOU'VE GOT *YOUR* PERSONAL HELL... I'VE GOT *MINE.*

POLICE

5 NEWS

...AUTHORITIES ARE CALLING THE EXPLOSION A FREAK ACCIDENT. NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED, BUT SOURCES SAY THE OFFICERS WILL BE TREATED AS HEROES WHO DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY...

OH GOD. THAT'S... THAT'S ALL MY FAULT.

NO. YOU DID NOT KNOW.

FRANK WANTED YOU TO KNOW YOU CAN STAY FOR THE NIGHT AND GET RESTED UP BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT. HE'S GONNA BE BUSY, VISTIN' THE SHERIFF IN THE HOSPITAL AND WITH... WELL... FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS.

THANKS. WE'LL KEEP IT TIDY.

HAZELWOOD... WHERE DO ***WE*** STAND?

HOW DO YOU MEAN?

ALL OF THIS. YOU CAN COVER UP WHAT HAPPENED, BUT WHAT ABOUT ***ME?*** DO I HAVE TO DYE MY HAIR BLOND, MOVE TO THE COUNTRY AND AVOID DONUT SHOPS?

IT'LL TAKE SOME DOING... I'VE GOT A LOT OF SECURITY CAM FOOTAGE THAT WILL JUST HAVE TO DISAPPEAR. BUT AS FAR AS YOU AND THE LAW ARE CONCERNED... THE SHERIFF AND I ARE GOING TO DO OUR DAMNEDEST TO GET YOU ***TABULA RASA.***

THANKS.

BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO DO ME A FAVOR. DON'T GET BACK ON THE LISTS. YOU... YOU DO YOUR THING... BUT STAY LOW.

I'LL DO MY DAMNEDEST.

LATER.

...BEFORE, I WAS JUST USELESS... BUT NOW, 'CUZ OF ME, A BUNCH OF PEOPLE DIED, VLAD. I-I DON'T DESERVE TO LIVE. I'M WORTHLESS.

SHHHH. YOU ARE A GOOD PERSON IN YOUR HEART. YOU HAVE WORTH. PEOPLE CARE FOR YOU.

I CARE FOR YOU.

MARGARET? ARE YOU STILL AWAKE?

I AM.

MMMM?

YOU AREN'T KISSING ME BACK.

I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE, WELL, I FEEL SO *ALIVE* RIGHT NOW. AND SINCE THAT WAS YOUR LAST CASE, I THOUGHT WE'D CELEBRATE. Y'KNOW...?

I THOUGHT WE'D MAKE LOVE.

THAT WASN'T MY LAST CASE.

BUT... YOU'RE FREE AND CLEAR WITH THE COPS... ASHLEY IS GONE--

MARGARET, LOOK... ALL THIS TAUGHT ME IS THAT *I CAN'T QUIT.* WHEN I LET MY GUARD DOWN, PEOPLE START DROPPING LEFT AND RIGHT.

THEN I GO WITH YOU. YOU MADE ME LOVE YOU. YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME NOW.

YOU DON'T LOVE ME.

IS THAT IT? I'VE FOLLOWED YOU ACROSS THIS COUNTRY. I'VE DONE EVERYTHING I COULD DO TO BE NEAR YOU, WHETHER I KNEW THE REASON I WAS DOING IT OR NOT.

AND I'M SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU, BREAKING *EVERY* RULE I HAVE JUST SO I CAN BE AS CLOSE TO YOU AS POSSIBLE. WHAT ARE YOU NOT SEEING HERE?! WHAT ARE YOU SO *AFRAID* OF?

THE PROBLEM IS I DON'T LOVE YOU. I DON'T THINK I'M REALLY INTO GIRLS. THIS WAS...

...IT WAS A MISTAKE.

I'LL BE ON THE COUCH DOWNSTAIRS. WE LEAVE IN THE MORNING.

ELIZABETH CITY, NORTH CAROLINA.

THREE MONTHS FROM NOW.

I'M UNUSUAL. NOT SO TYPICAL. WAY TOO SMART TO BE WAITING AROUND.

TEEN TALENT SHOW TODAY!

Elizabeth City Elementary

TAI CHI PRACTICING. SNOWBOARD CHAMPION. I COULD FIX THE FLAT ON YOUR CAR. I MIGHT EVEN BE A ROCK STAR.

THANK YOU, RACHEL!

OH MY GOD, RACHEL, YOU WERE *A-MAY-ZIIIING!*

YEAH! YOU, LIKE, *LOCKED* DOWN FIRST PLACE!

MS. RITER? RACHEL RITER?

I BELIEVE YOU HAVE SOME INCREDIBLE POTENTIAL. IT JUST NEEDS THE PROPER INCENTIVE TO BE UNLEASHED.

LIKE, WHO ARE YOU? A RECORD EXECUTIVE?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

JEFFREY BREVARD. PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

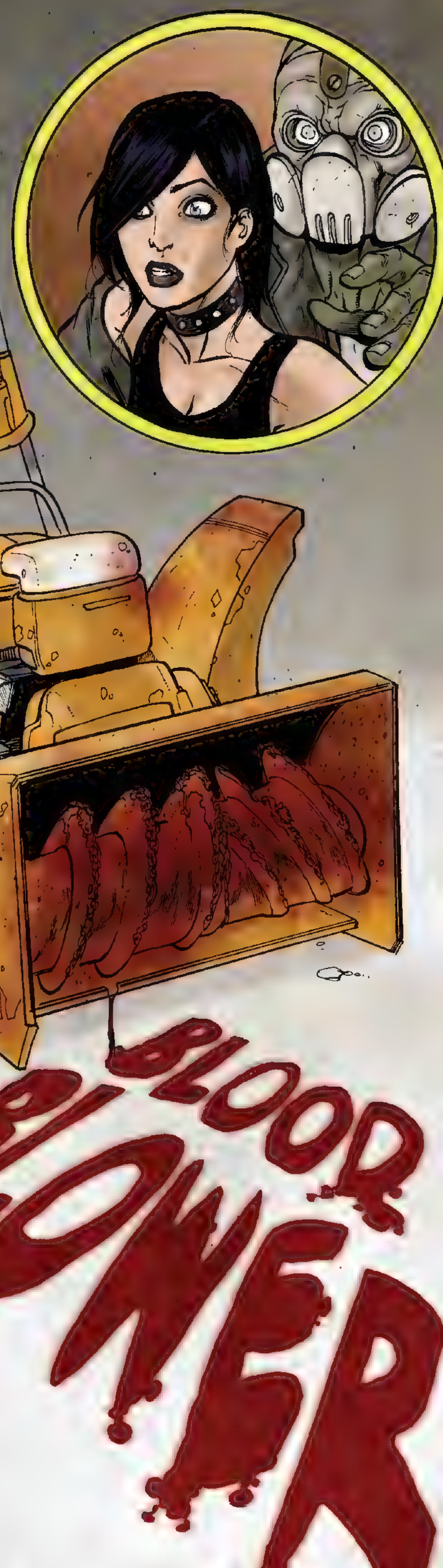
THE END?

DOUBLE FEATURE

SPECIAL DELIVERY: DEATH!

the MAD, MAD MAILMAN

HACK/SLASH #23A by **TIM SEELEY**



BLOOD BOWL MURDER

CAT CURIO in case 1012:

THE CASE OF THE MAD, MAD MAILMAN!

FROSTBURG, MARYLAND.

FOURTEEN YEARS AGO.

...BUT, LINUS IS A PRETTY GOOD KID, SO HE GOES TO BED QUITE PROMPTLY AT NINE-THIRTY.

BEA ON THE OTHER HAND, WELL, I DON'T THINK I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT SHE IS *QUITE* THE LITTLE PRINCESS.

THAT'S GREAT, CAT--

I FOUND THAT IF I READ HER FAVORITE STORY, WHICH IS, BY THE WAY, ***GOOD NIGHT MOON***, SHE'LL USUALLY SETTLE DOWN.

WOW. ***REALLY*** GREAT--

HOT MILK. HOT MILK WILL USUALLY DO IT--

CAT! LOOK... UH, IT'S GREAT THAT YOU'RE HERE TO HELP. BUT I HAVE TO DO... SOMETHING.

OVER *THERE.*

OF COURSE! WELL, I'M NOT *JUST* A BABYSITTER, SO I SHOULD DO MY OTHER JOB. AS *CAT CURIO, INTREPID DETECTIVE!*

RIGHT. OKAY, WELL, DO YOUR THING. I'LL GET BACK TO WORK.

HELLO, FELLOW DETECTIVE.

MS. CURIO. YOUR DAD SAY YOU COULD BE HERE?

SORT OF. HE JUST TOLD ME TO GO KEEP BUSY.

AND OUT OF HIS HAIR FOR AWHILE?

NO. MY FATHER IS VERY NEARLY BALD, DETECTIVE. SO, WHAT HAVE WE GOT?

THIS MAILMAN, ONE MR. ROBERT WYNORSKI, CAME TO DELIVER THE MAIL AT ELEVEN A.M. TO THIS SORORITY HOUSE.

HE STRANGLED THE GIRL WHO WENT TO THE DOOR, WALKED TO THE FIREPLACE, RETRIEVED A POKER, BLUDGEONED TWO MORE GIRLS, AND THEN BLUDGEONED HIMSELF TO DEATH.

MR. WYNORSKI?! BUT HE'S SUCH A NICE MAN! HE WOULDN'T HURT *ANYONE!*

THIS *IS* A MYSTERY!

A MAILMAN WENT NUTS AND KILLED A BUNCH OF PEOPLE.

THIS IS THE *NINETIES.* IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME, HONEY.

MYSTERY *SOLVED.*

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! MR. WYNORSKI WAS ALWAYS A VERY NICE MAN. WE HAD WONDERFUL TALKS.

THE MYSTERY SOLVER'S CATALOG HAS OVER THIRTEEN-HUNDRED ITEMS IN IT.

I ORDERED THIS BMJ CRIME LAB MICROSCOPE, PRODUCT NUMBER ONE-OH-ONE-FIVE, BUT THEY HAD SEVERAL VARIATIONS...

...INCLUDING ONE THAT HAD SEVEN ATTACHMENTS INSTEAD OF THE FIVE THAT CAME WITH THIS ONE...

FRAGILE

HE WAS ALWAYS GETTING FOOD ON HIMSELF. YOU COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT HE'D EATEN BY ALL THE STAINS ON HIS...

...SHIRT.

LETTER CARRIER

HMMM. THERE'S A STRANGE ONE. WONDER WHAT MAKES A **BLACK** STAIN?

FOOD THAT MIGHT CAUSE A BLACK STAIN: ONE, GRAPES. TWO, CHERRIES. THREE...

OR MAYBE IT WASN'T FOOD. MAYBE MR. WYNORSKI WAS SLOPPY WITH EVERYTHING.

OTHER THINGS THAT MIGHT CAUSE A BLACK STAIN: ONE, MARKER. TWO, PEN...

POLICE

OR THAT...

OH NO! THE POLICE MUST HAVE MISSED THIS. PROBABLY SO FOCUSED ON ALL THE BLOOD AND YUCKIES THAT THEY DIDN'T THINK TO DIG IN THE BUSHES.

IT'S A PACKAGE. LOOKS LIKE IT FELL OUT OF THE MAIL BAG. THE ADDRESS SAYS ALICE CILENTO, ONE-SEVEN-ONE EAST COLLEGE AVENUE, FROSTBURG, MARYLAND.

I SHOULD PROBABLY PICK THIS UP AND TURN IT RIGHT OVER TO THE POLICE. MAYBE THE DETECTIVE CAN USE IT TO SOLVE THE CRIME.

A MAILMAN WENT NUTS AND KILLED A BUNCH OF PEOPLE. MYSTERY SOLVED. I'M MEAN AND NASTY, AND I'M GOING TO TREAT YOU LIKE YOU'RE DUMB.

EVIDENCE!

CAAAATHERINE! DINNER!

JUST A SECOND, MOTHER!

HMMM... LOOKS SORT OF LIKE OIL DOES THROUGH A MICROSCOPE. BUT WHY WOULD SOMEONE SEND A VIAL OF MOTOR OIL THROUGH THE MAIL?

I MADE YOUR FAVORITE...

OH BOY! STEAMED CABBAGE AND BEETS!

SO, HONEY, DID YOU SOLVE ANY CRIMES TODAY?

DID YOU GET THE *LUNCH BOX LUPIN?* OR THE *VANDAL PHANTOM OF THE DRIVE-THRU?*

NO. BUT I DID INVESTIGATE A CASE INVOLVING A MASS MURDER OF SORORITY GIRLS BY A MAILMAN.

ONE OF THE GIRLS HAD A POKER STUCK RIGHT IN HER...

OH...

CAT? SOMETHING WRONG?

THERE'S SOMEONE OUTSIDE! WATCHING US!

CATHERINE! YOU SIT DOWN! YOU STARTLED BILLY-JACK!

COME ON, KITTEN... YOU'RE JUST, WELL, FREAKED OUT BY THE CRIME SCENE...

NO! THERE WAS SOMEONE THERE!

I KNOW I SAW IT...

Waaaaah!

CAT, YOU'RE SUCH A 'TARD.

RONNIE! DON'T CALL YOUR SISTER A RETARD!

Waaaaah!

I'M GONNA GET THE DOOR, HONEY. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

EVENIN' OFFICER MARKS. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU THIS EVENING?

HEY, MIKE. JUST STOPPING BY. THE DETECTIVE WANTED TO HAVE A WORD WITH CAT.

OH SURE. *KITTEN!* SOME POLICE ARE HERE TO SEE YOU!

OH. HELLO! WHAT'S UP, MR. MARKS? DETECTIVE?

WE WERE JUST WONDERING IF YOU HAPPENED TO ACCIDENTALLY PICK ANYTHING UP AT THE CRIME SCENE TODAY.

SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE USED TO SOLVE THIS MASS MURDER?

HMM. I DID FIND *SOMETHING*. THERE WAS THIS PRETTY ROCK ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE HOUSE.

IT WAS REALLY INTERESTING. I THINK MAYBE IT WAS AN IGNEOUS ROCK, BUT IT HAD BEEN BLACK-TOPPED OVER, SO IT WAS BOTH SHINY AND THEN KINDA ROUGH, BUT ALL BLACK...

IGNEOUS ROCK IS FAIRLY COMMON IN MARYLAND. SOME OTHER KINDS OF ROCKS IN MARYLAND ARE GNEISS, QUARTZITE, SCHIST, SANDSTONE, SHALE, SILTSTONE, RED SANDSTONE, WHICH IS DIFFERENT I GUESS THAN REGULAR SANDSTONE--

YEAH. YEAH, WE GET IT, CAT.

WELL, WE'RE SORRY TO BOTHER YOU FOLKS. FINISH UP YOUR DINNER. LET'S GO, DETECTIVE.

SHE'S HIDING SOMETHING.

OH, COME ON. CAT IS HARMLESS.

SHE'S Y'KNOW, MENTALLY HANDICAPPED.

SHE'S LIKE, *AUTISTIC*, I THINK.

IF YOU SAY SO...

SOMEONE AT THE WINDOW. COPS COMING AROUND.

THAT'S NOT JUST MOTOR OIL IN THAT VIAL.

I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF IT.

LATER.

G'NIGHT, KITTEN. YOU... UH... YOU'RE ALRIGHT? THAT MURDER SCENE DIDN'T SCARE YOU TOO MUCH?

NOPE.

I KNOW YOU LOVE MYSTERIES, BUT, PLEASE, STICK WITH... SMALL MYSTERIES, OKAY, KITTEN?

YES, DADDY.

*TIME TO TRY OUT THE **BMJ CRIME LAB TACTICAL RAPPELLING HARNESS,** PRODUCT NUMBER ONE-ONE-EIGHT-ONE!*

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE DETECTIVE LADY THAT I DON'T LIKE. SHE WASN'T INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED UNTIL I TOOK THE VIAL AWAY.

SHE KNEW ABOUT THE BLACK STUFF. AND SHE KNOWS WHY NICE OLD MR. WYNORSKI KILLED THOSE GIRLS.

IF SHE FINDS THIS, SHE'S GONNA COVER IT UP. BUT IF ONLY I KNOW ABOUT IT, I CAN FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

EVIDENCE

EVI ENCE

WHAT!? IT ISN'T BURNING. NOT EVEN THE SOAKED BOX...

NO. IT'S HOT. **VERY** HOT.

I THINK THIS CASE IS BIGGER THAN THE **LUNCHBOX LUPIN**. MAYBE EVEN BIGGER THAN THE CASE OF THE **DING DONG DITCH DEMON**.

THE FLAME IS *BLACK.*

I HAVE TO FIND OUT WHO THIS WAS GOING TO.

SOON.

OH GOSH. THIS HOUSE IS REALLY SCARY.

I WANT TO GO HOME. GET IN MY BED. HIDE UNDER THE COVERS. BUT MR. WYNORSKI WAS ALWAYS GOOD TO ME.

THE MYSTERY SOLVER'S CATALOG HAS OVER THIRTEEN-HUNDRED ITEMS IN IT.

I ORDERED THIS BMJ SPY LAB SPY TELESCOPE, PRODUCT NUMBER SEVEN-FIVE-FOUR.

THERE'S A BLUE ONE, A RED ONE, A WHITE ONE... I ORDERED THE GUNMETAL GREY ONE...

FRAGILE

*AND I **KNOW** HE DIDN'T KILL THOSE GIRLS CUZ HE WENT CRAZY.*

SHE'S HERE. I KNEW IT. MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, MY ASS.

IN THE NAME OF THE DARK FLAME THAT LED YOU AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE, I COMMAND YOU TO STOP HER. AT *ALL COSTS.*

THERE'S A WOMAN ON THE PHONE. PROBABLY ALICE. CAN'T HEAR HER.

GOOD THING I ORDERED THE **BMJ SPY LAB PARABOLIC AMPLIFIER.**

...OOK, I **KNOW** IT'S STILL A PRETTY LOOSE ORGANIZATION, BUT THAT'S AN **IDIOTIC** RISK!

OH... RIGHT, SURE. NOW WE **KNOW** IT WORKS. GOOD FOR US. WE CAN MAKE A MAILMAN GO POSTAL. ALL HAIL THE GREAT **BLACK LAMP SOCIETY...**

THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY?

OH!

CREEEEEKK

SNAK!

AHHH!

HOOFT!

WHUMP!

OH! OH, THANK YOU. ARE YOU A SUPERHERO? LIKE BATMAN OR SHE-RA?

THERE'S SOME BAD PEOPLE HERE. THEY DID SOMETHING WITH THIS BLACK FIRE...

THEY TURNED A GOOD MAN INTO A KILLER...

SHHHH...

SHUNK!

HUNH. CASE... ONE-OH-ONE-TWO. CASE OF THE MAD...

MAD... MAILMAN.

CASE STIL. OPEN...

END OF FEATURE ONE!

GOBLES, MICHIGAN.
CHRISTMAS DAY.
ROAD RANGER
24/7
Lite
LOTTO
OPEN
MERRY X MAS
FIREWOOD
HOMETOWN
I REALLY CAN'T STAY... BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE.
Owwww. Oowwoww... baby... cold... owwoooo!
I'VE GOT TO GO AWAY... BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE.
BLOOD BLOWER. SERIOUSLY?
PLEASE. LIKE IT'S ANY WEIRDER THAN ANYTHING ELSE YOU'VE SEEN, CASSIE.
OOH... I LOVE THE KNIFE WITH THE BEARS FISHING IN A SUNSET PAINTED ON IT.
PETS! TOYS
THINK THAT'LL KILL AN EVIL SNOW BLOWER?
HEY, YOU THINK I *WANT* TO SPEND MY CHRISTMAS DAY DOING *THIS?*
I COULD BE WITH MY FAMILY RATHER THAN SCROUNGING FOR *WEAPONS* AT THE ONLY PLACE OPEN WITHIN FORTY MILES.
COLLECTIBLE KNIFE 9.99
RELAX, LISA. IF SOMETHING IS SNOW BLOWING INNOCENT PUPPIES, THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH TO A SLASHER FOR ME.
AND I KNOW ANIMALS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU.

YEAH, I DID NOTICE THAT YOU DIDN'T COMPLAIN VERY MUCH ABOUT LEAVING THE HOUSE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

SOMETHING IS UP WITH YOU AND GEORGIA. EVERY TIME SHE COMES IN THE ROOM, YOU *LEAVE*.

DID YOU GUYS GET IN A FIGHT? ARE YOU FIGHTING OVER A BOY OR SOMETHING? I WAS YOUNG ONCE, YOU KNOW. I KNOW HOW GIRLS CAN BE.

YEAH, WELL... HOW ABOUT BUYING ME A CHRISTMAS PRESENT, GRANNY?

ONLY $4.99!

PET SHOP TOYS

HMM... I WONDER IF I SHOULD GET POOCH SOMETHING?

HE'S BEEN KIND OF WEIRD LATELY. I THINK HE MIGHT BE IN *HEAT*, OR RUTTING, OR...

IT'S HARD TO TELL WITH *ALIEN DOGS*, Y'KNOW?

THAT REMINDS ME. WE'RE GOING TO NEED ONE OF THESE.

YOU THINK POOCH WILL HAVE SEX WITH THAT?

UH, NO... WE'RE GETTING THIS BECAUSE, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN *WAY* TOO LONG, IT'S *NOT* GONNA BE YOU OR ME THAT GETS TO BE *BAIT*.

No! No! Pooch hates it ever so much!

STOP SQUIRMING!

I MAPPED OUT ALL THE INCIDENTS AND ADDRESSES OF PEOPLE REPORTING LOST PETS.

EVERY DISAPPEARANCE CORRESPONDS TO A NIGHTTIME SNOWFALL...

TATER CHIPS

GULP

THAT MAKES SENSE. WHOEVER IS--

POOCH.

STOP.

SQUIRMING!

WHOEVER IS DOING THIS IS USING THAT TIME SINCE THE BLOOD BLOWER WOULD BLEND IN WITH THE SOUNDS OF ALL THE OTHER SNOW BLOWERS.

NOT TO MENTION THAT A NEW FALLEN SNOW HELPS COVER UP THE... AHEM... ***REMAINS*** FOR A FEW DAYS.

THEN WE TIMED THIS PERFECTLY. NEW SNOW...

...AND THE WORLD'S UGLIEST *POODLE.*

If you were not already the Most Hated Cassie Hack, poor, poor Pooch would now certainly hate you even more.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

OH MY GOD. I'M GOING TO *DIE.*

I'M SOOO *STUFFED!*

BEST CHRISTMAS DINNER EVER, *GERTRUDE.*

I KNOW ALL KINDS OF THINGS TO DO WITH MEATLOAF.

WAIT, THE FOOD OR THE ROCK STAR?

BOTH.

HURR HURR.

WHICH HOLIDAY FILM WILL WE WATCH TONIGHT?

HOW ABOUT *PORKY'S?*

HEY KIDDO. DON'T YA WANNA COME IN AND PLAY SOME OF THAT ROCK BAND VIDEO GAME CRAP THE BOYS LIKE SO MUCH?

SOMETHING BUGGING YA, HON?

OH... NO. I MEAN, I'M NOT MAD ABOUT THE FIGHT WE ALL GOT IN OR ANYTHING.

GOOD. I'M ALMOST ***APOLOGIZED OUT***, I THINK. AND, HEY, CAN I TELL YOU SOMETHING?

YEAH... SURE.

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF HEARTBREAK IN MY DAY. SEEN LOTS OF LOVE THAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN, AND LOTS THAT SHOULD HAVE.

NO MATTER WHAT SHE SAYS, CASSIE LOVES YOU. THE FACT THAT SHE CAN'T DEAL WITH IT DOESN'T MAKE IT UNTRUE. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN, HON?

I... =SNIFF= OKAY... THANKS, GERT.

NOW LET'S GO GET LOADED AND SHOW THE FELLAS HOW YOU'RE ***SUPPOSED*** TO ROCK.

MICHIGAN.

I'M SO COLD I WANT TO CUT POOCH IN HALF LIKE A TAUNTAUN AND CRAWL INSIDE.

SHHHHH!

WE'VE BEEN SITTING HERE FOR A LONG TIME. I THINK WE HAVE THE WRONG PLAN.

WE MARKED ALL THE PREVIOUS SPOTS AND SIGHTINGS. THIS IS BLOOD BLOWER CENTRAL.

I DON'T THINK THIS IS A RANDOM THING, OR AN OPPORTUNISTIC THING. THE BLOWER DOESN'T KILL BECAUSE IT *LIKES* TO KILL.

THE BLOWER KILLS BECAUSE IT IS *ANNOYED*.

THE SNOW BLOWER DOESN'T LIKE BARKING?

THINK ABOUT IT. ALL THE PUREED PUPPIES HAVE BEEN SMALL DOGS. *YIPPY* DOGS. *ANNOYING* DOGS.

YOU THINK POOCH SMELLS WORSE ON THE *INSIDE* THAN HE DOES ON THE *OUTSIDE?*

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT. I GET IT.

POOCH! MAKE SOME NOISE!

Yes, yes, humble Pooch makes noise.

=Ahem=

I really can't stay... Baby it's cold outside...

♫owowww. owwww♫

baby... cold... owwoOop!

OH MY GOD. WHAT IS THAT HORRIBLE SOUND?

I-I THINK THAT'S HIS *MATING CALL.*

YOU THINK THIS WILL WORK?

IF NOT, *I'M* GONNA RUN HIM OVER WITH A SNOW BLOWER.

owowpoooogw!

ooowwwwwwjoe!

♫owowwoooooowy♫

GRRNNNGHHH!

I HATE THEM. *I HATE DOGS!*

THE NOISE. MUST. *STOP!*

owowwowwo

YOU HEAR THAT?

I CAN BARELY HEAR ANYTHING OVER POOCH'S LOVE SONG.

FALSE ALARM.

WOOGGO really can't stay!

Owoooo-- oh?

Most Hated Cassie Hack?

Humble Pooch...

FORRROOOM!!

...makes most wonderful bait, he does.

POOCH!

HOLY--!

VRRR

AW, SHIT!

VRRROOORRR!

Mistress Lisa!

STAY HERE.

I GOT LISA.

THIS IS SO *FUCKING* LAME.

CHRROOM!

CHRRRAAK

CASSIE!

I'M GOOD. I'M GOOD.

OOOH. I LIKE WHAT IT DID TO THE BAT.

THIS DOESN'T LOOK PARTICULARLY EVIL OR POSSESSED.

IN FACT, FROM THE LOOK OF THE TRANSMITTER ON THE ENGINE I'D SAY IT'S REMOTE CONTROLLED.

POOCH, YOU THINK YOU CAN GET A SCENT OFF THAT THING, SO WE CAN TRACK DOWN THE ***ASSHOLE*** WHO MADE IT?

Yes, yes. most humble Pooch can smell his sickly human stink already.

THANKS POOCH. I THINK NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO APOLOGIZE FOR OUR... PAST.

Yes. Pooch forgives you for hurting him, and for killing his master. But Pooch's new masters are his most favorite.

Most Hated Cassie Hack is Pooch's Most Hated no longer.

WHEN WE FIND HIM, THE ONLY JUSTICE WILL BE IF WE LET POOCH DO ALL KINDS OF TERRIBLE THINGS TO THE JERK.

I SECOND THAT. Y'KNOW WHAT? WE ALL MAKE A PRETTY GOOD LITTLE TEAM.

Oowwoww. Owwww... Baby it's cold outside! Owwooooo!

THE END.

ENTRY WOUND

HACK/SLASH ENTRY WOUND ONE SHOT Cover B

by TIM SEELEY & KIERAN OATS

SOMEWHERE.

An epic story is unfolding. The story's antagonist: **Mary Shelley Lovecraft**, a sentient hyperconcept obsessed with destroying the walls that separate ideaspace from physical space. Mary tires of existing at the whim of the fragile minds possessed of the conscious living.

Her plan began as a quiet, secret invasion, as stories and tales began to drive their creators to insanity. Eventually the concepts began to take hold in reality, replacing their creators in physical history until time began to unravel in a final crisis.

The story's protagonists: Superheroes, investigators of the strange, the strange beings themselves; drawn from across realities, unified in their quest to prevent the dark reign of Mary.

The Dusk Patrol. John Prufrock and the agents of THE LODGE. The residents of the Boneyard. The Answer. The Daughter of Alice Liddle. A demoness in the employ of heaven. The Living Corpse. The Halloween Man.

It is a story that will shake dimensions. Whole universes.

It is a story that promises to remake and undo, unmake and redo, so that nothing will ever be the same.

This is not that story.

THIS IS LATE KNIGHT A.M., AND I'M YOUR HOST ALAN KNIGHT. WE'LL BE GOING TO THE PHONES IN JUST A MINUTE TO DISCUSS ALL YOUR TALES OF THE UNUSUAL AND THE PARANORMAL.

LOTS OF CALLS TONIGHT. AND IT'S NOT EVEN A FULL MOON. SEEMS LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR MAYBE.

LET'S GO TO A CALL.

=SNNNRRRK=

HEY AL, LOVE THE SHOW. I JUST WANTED TO CALL AND FOLLOW UP ON THE "SERIAL-KILLER KILLER" EPISODE.

A BUDDY OF MINE... HIS COUSIN WORKS FOR THE JACKSON PD... SAYS THEY HAD THE "S.K.K." IN CUSTODY A WEEK OR SO BACK. SAYS SHE ESCAPED TOO. Y'HEAR ABOUT ANY OF THIS?

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW, THE S.K.K. IS A STORY WE'VE COVERED A FEW TIMES HERE AT THE SHOW.

SEEMS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE IN OUR GREAT COUNTRY, IS A WOMAN AND AN ACCOMPLICE WHO TRAVEL FROM TOWN TO TOWN KILLING **OTHER** SERIAL KILLERS.

SOME VERSIONS OF THE STORY SAY THAT THESE KILLERS ARE OF THE PARANORMAL VARIETY. "**SLASHERS**" TO LAYMAN LIKE OURSELVES.

THE S.K.K. CASE IS OFTEN LINKED TO A TEENAGE GIRL NAMED **CASSANDRA HACK**, WHOSE OWN MOTHER WAS THE PERPETRATOR OF THE "**LUNCH LADY MURDERS**" IN WESTERN WISCONSIN A FEW YEARS BACK.

YOU'RE THE FIRST TO MENTION IT, CALLER. TRUTH, LIE OR CONSPIRACY?

CONSPIRACY. THIS IS A COVER--

CHK

CASSANDRA. WE ARE HERE.

GHUH...

OH MAN, I KNOW I'M TIRED WHEN I *DROOL* IN MY SLEEP. GROSS.

HOW'RE YOU HOLDING UP, *VLAD?*

DRINK AND DIE

I HAVE HAD SO MUCH OF THE CAFFEINES THAT I FEEL JITTERY AND NERVOUS LIKE A SMALL ANIMAL.

I AM A CHINCHILLA.

MAN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAUSES EVERY SINGLE *HOLIDAY*, *SEASONAL* AND *ONE-DAY-A-YEAR* SLASHER TO GET ACTIVE AT THE SAME TIME, BUT I DO KNOW THAT IT CAUSES YOU AND I TO LOSE SOME SERIOUS FUCKING SHUT-EYE.

SO, WE'RE OUT OF BULLETS, MONEY, AND GAS.

BUT, WE'VE MANAGED TO TAKE OUT SGT. KRAMER, JR. (MEMORIAL DAY), RUDOLPH (CHRISTMAS), NEW YEAR'S EVA (OBVIOUS), THE LAZARUS KILLER (EASTER)... OH, AND THAT LITTLE LEPRECHAUN BASTARD.

WHO'S NEXT?

PETER LAPAGE. THE CANDLEMAS MURDERER.

PUNXSUTAWNEY CEMETERY
EST 1832

YAAAWWWW. RIGHT... THE GROUND-HOG PSYCHO. "IF YOU SEE YOUR SHADOW, SIX MORE WEEKS OF DEATH" OR WHATEVER.

SO, HE FIRST SHOWED UP IN NINETEEN- SEVENTY-FIVE, AND THEN ONLY SHOWS UP IN YEARS WHEN THE 'HOG DOESN'T SEE HIS SHADOW. EXCEPT THIS YEAR HE'S EARLY, JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHERS.

HURRRM.

YEP. SURPRISE OF SURPRISES. THE WOODCHUCK WORSHIPPING NUT FUCK GOT UP BEFORE WE GOT HERE.

PETER LAPAGE
BORN: FEBRUARY 2ND, 1932
DIED FEBRUARY 2ND, 1974
BELOVED SON

AND I WAS SO LOOKING FORWARD TO JUST DROPPING THE DYNAMITE AND WATCHING SOME FIREWORKS FROM THE VAN.

OKAY, PARTNER. WHAT'S THE PLAN, FOR THE *SIXTH* TIME IN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS?

BOOM STICKS

FOLLOW THESE TRACKS, MOST LIKELY TO A BAR, A PARTY OR A WIFE-SWAP ORGY, FOR THAT IS WHERE KILLER WILL BE DRAWN. CHOP HIM UP. SLEEP FOR MANY HOURS.

IT JUST SOUNDS BETTER WHEN YOU SAY IT.

YES. I KNOW.

SO, RURAL PENNSYLVANIA... BET THEY HAVE SOME *GREEEEAAAT* PARTIES AROUND HERE.

NEARBY...

JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TO MY FIRST TOPPERWARE PARTY.

GOSH. THIS IS JUST SO EXCITING ISN'T IT?

WE'LL START WITH THE SECOND PART OF THE PRESENTATION IN FIFTEEN MINUTES. SO, TALK AMONGST YOURSELVES AND ENJOY SOME HORS D'OUERVES!

HEY THERE MRS. MILLER. UH... FANCY SEEING YOU OUT HERE.

IT'S OKAY, RUSTY. YOUR MOM IS SO FOCUSED ON HER PLASTIC TRAYS, SHE HAS NO IDEA WE'RE OUT HERE TOGETHER.

SWEET.

MMMM.

ONLY GOT FIFTEEN MINUTES. MAKE IT FAST. BUT, NOT "MY HUSBAND FAST."

MMM...

THAT'S IT.

OOOH...

PUPPIES ARE SO MUCH EASIER TO TRAIN THAN OLD DOGS--

WHA?

OH GOD.

GHK!

GHAH!

THE SHADOW YOU SEE IS THE SHADE OF YOUR INDISCRETIONS.

YOU'RE... SUFFOCATING... HIM...

YESSSS.

MMMMHHHFF!

OH NO YOU DON'T, PETEY. NOBODY GETS OFFED WHILE MUMBLING IN THE MOSS ON MY WATCH.

SRUNCH!

CLEAR THIS HOUSE THE WAY YOU DO BEST, PARTNER!

YES.

RUN! THE SCARY KILLER MAN IS HERE, AND HE IS ME! YOU MUST ESCAPE THE HOUSE! *CHA CHA CHA KILL KILL KILL!*

AIIIIGGHH!!

TOPPER

COME ON! I'VE HAD TWO HOURS OF SLEEP IN THREE DAYS. JUST *GO DOWN.*

BUT, I MEAN, NOT LIKE THAT GUY...

GHRRRUNH!!

SNOW... SO SOFT AND FLUFFY...

HOW LONG AND DARK WILL YOUR SHADOW BE? WILL IT--

WHSSH

HUNH?

VLAD. DID YOU MISS?

HURF!

HRM. I WILL BLAME THAT ONE ON THE CHINCHILLAS.

URR... AND THAT ONE.

THWUD

MNUUHHHHH...

GHRAH...

YOU... YOU STAY RIGHT THERE!

POK!

YOU... YOU JUST HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MISTER. I CALLED THE POLICE ON YOU KIDS...

YOUR LITTLE PRANK, WELL IT'S JUST NOT FUNNY!

SILENCE, HAG!

AH!

THE WOMAN!

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE USED ALL EIGHT OF OUR LAST BULLETS ON THAT LEPRECHAUN.

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE...

TAKE HER DOWN

NO... I AM NOT THE VILLAIN! MY WORLD IS SUPERIOR IN EVERY WAY. THE "REAL" WORLD IS FAULTY!

SORRY. THE REAL WORLD IS THE ONLY ONE WE'VE GOT.

KRIK

HK.

URRR...

THAT... THAT'S IT? HE'S DONE?

I BELIEVE HE IS RETURNING TO HIS GRAVE.

TNT · CAUT

OH NO HE ISN'T.

SOON.

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

JUST PLUG YOUR EARS AND GET OUT OF THE WAY--

HUR HUR HUR HUR.

BWAHOOOOM

THERE. NOW, YOU GO RESCHEDULE YOUR PARTY.

AND WHEN THE POLICE GET HERE, TELL THEM THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIT WHAT'S LEFT OF THE CANDLEMAS MURDERER IN HERE.

LATER.

IT'S JUST ABOUT DAWN, WHICH MEANS IT'S TIME FOR THE LATE KNIGHT TO RETREAT AS THE "RATIONAL" WORLD OF DAYTIME ENCROACHES.

SCENIC OVERLOO EXIT 1C 1 MIL

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR CALLS, ABOUT EVERY-THING FROM THE S.K.K., TO THE BIZARRE LIGHTS IN THE SKY TO THE MULTIPLE PEOPLE WHO DREAMED THAT AN OCTOPUS WOMAN WAS TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.

UNTIL THE NIGHT IS DRAGGED INTO THE LIGHT, THIS IS ALAN KNIGHT, SAYING GOOD MORNING.

CHK

An epic story is unfolding.

The antagonist: Murderous, undead entities consumed by hate for the living.

The protagonists: Unlikely hunters without homes who defend the innocent and the sinful.

It is a story that involves many threads, as the protagonists save lives, and the survivors become saviors.

It is a story made up of many moments, some intense and terrifying, and some small, quiet and intimate.

It is a story about the kind of friends who will wipe drool off your face when you're sleeping.

This is that story.

SONS OF MAN

HACK/SLASH #24A by **TIM SEELEY**

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA. 2:12 AM. TWO DAYS AGO.

CLUB NOCTURNE.

HAPPY NEW YEAR'S TO YOU TOO...

YOU FREAKY, KINKY MOTHER-FUCKERS.

I BROUGHT YOU SOME CHAMPAGNE, GIRL, SO HOW ABOUT THAT KISS--

UH, THERE'S A GUY LOOKING FOR YOU.

HELLO, LOUIS.

SAMHAIN! FUCK ME RUNNIN'!

TAKE A WALK WITH ME.

MAN, I DUNNO WHAT YOU WANT WITH *ME!*

I QUIT THAT *BLACK LAMP* SHIT. TOO RESTRICTIVE.

I MEAN, I LIKE TO GET MY *FREAK* ON SOMETIMES.

SHUT UP, LOUIS. WHERE ARE THEY HOLDING AVA PARK?

HUNF! MAN, EVEN IF I KNEW I WOULDN'T TELL YOU! THOSE BLACK LAMP DUDES ARE CRAZIER THAN SCIENTOLOGISTS! THEY'D KILL ME IF I SAID SHIT!

NOT MY BALLS, MAN!

YOU *KNOW*, LOUIS. ASSUME I'LL DO WORSE THAN KILL YOU IF YOU DON'T TELL ME.

SOON.

IT'S ALL YOURS.

UH...

NOT ONE WORD, MOTHERFUCKER!

TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA. NEAR YBOR CITY.

GEORGIA PEACHES/MARGARET CRUMP'S HOUSE.

TODAY. 1:15 AM.

SO... BEEN NICE SEEING YOU GUYS AGAIN.

YES. GOOD-BYE GEORGIA. YOU MAY ALWAYS CALL UPON US.

YEAH. SEE YOU SOON.

RIGHT. WELL. LATER.

THAT IS ALL?

GODDAMN IT.

MARGARET. WAIT...

CAS. JUST... JUST FORGET IT.

LOOK. I... WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING *TO* SAY, AND IF THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, THEN IT'S BEST YOU JUST LET ME WALK INTO MY HOUSE WHILE YOU DRIVE AWAY.

FUCK.

FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK.

YOU LEAD AN INTERESTING LIFE.

AH!

PWAP!

I DIDN'T MEAN TO STARTLE YOU. AN OLD HABIT.

SAMHAIN!? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I SAVED YOUR LIFE.* I BELIEVE YOU OWE ME.

*IT HAPPENED IN HACK/SLASH ISSUE #20!

I'VE COME TO COLLECT ON THAT DEBT.

I NEED YOU TO HELP ME RESCUE SOMEONE.

RRRA-- UH?

A PRISONER OF THE BLACK LAMP NAMED AVA PARK.

WHUMP!

GHUH!

AH. THIS MUST BE YOUR "MONSTROUS SIDEKICK." THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY TELLS STORIES ABOUT HIM.

YOU HURT HIM AND I'LL SMASH YOUR LIL' PUMPKIN-HEAD.

I DON'T INTEND TO HURT HIM. NOW, IF I COULD CONTINUE?

CHILL, VLAD. I WANT TO HEAR THIS GUY OUT.

THANK YOU. MAYBE WE COULD GO SOMEWHERE LESS CONSPICUOUS?

THE CLOVERDALE PUB. NEAR EMINENCE, INDIANA.

LAST CALL!

HAVE A GOOD NIGHT, KRANK. SAY HELLO TO THE MISSUS FOR ME.

YOU GOT IT, ELMER.

CHRIS?

OH, HEY... IT'S "THE NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN." HOW'S IT GOIN', MAGGIE?

IT'S BAR CLOSING TIME, AND I'M STILL WORKING. YOU FIGURE IT OUT.

HEH. SO WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?

STILL LOOKING INTO THE KYLE BELL CASE. I KNOW HE LIKED TO HANG OUT AT THIS BAR, SO I WAS GONNA CHAT WITH BARTENDER BILL.

WANT TO HANG OUT FOR A BIT, AND I CAN GIVE YOU A RIDE HOME?

NAH, I GOTTA GET BACK TO THE "WIFE."

HOW ABOUT I PUT IT THIS WAY? I CAN TELL YOU'VE HAD A FEW DRINKS. SO, IN THE NAME OF THE LAW, I *COMMAND* YOU TO TAKE A RIDE HOME FROM ME.

HEH. YOU ARE THE SHERIFF.

PHONE BOOK

FLORIDA.

BEACH CLOSED

VLAD, YOU CAN PUT THE MACHETES AWAY.

I DO NOT TRUST HIM.

IF HE WANTED ME DEAD, HE WOULDN'T HAVE SAVED MY ASS FROM THOSE BLACK LAMP FREAKS.

CASSANDRA! HE IS A STRANGER WITH A JACK-O-LANTERN FACE.

MY NAME IS ***SAMHAIN***. IF I EVER HAD ANOTHER NAME, I DO NOT REMEMBER IT. I DO NOT REMEMBER WHERE I COME FROM. I AM AS MUCH A STRANGER TO ***MYSELF*** AS I AM TO VLAD.

I DO NOT KNOW WHY I WEAR THIS MASK.

BUT I KNOW IT FEELS MORE LIKE MY FACE THAN THE ONE UNDERNEATH IT.

FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER I HAVE BEEN AT WAR WITH A GROUP CALLED ***THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY***. I BELIEVED THEY HAD KILLED THE ONE PERSON IMPORTANT TO ME. SO I STRUCK BACK.

THOUGH MY MEMORY IS FAULTY, I DO REMEMBER HOW TO KILL.

NOW THE SOCIETY PURSUES ***YOU***. WHEN I HEARD OF YOU, I SOUGHT YOU OUT. ANY ENEMY OF THE BLACK LAMP WAS PERHAPS A FRIEND OF MINE.

OKAY. AND THESE BLACK LAMP ASSHOLES ARE THE ONES WHO BROKE ME OUT OF JAIL, DRESSED ME AS A ***CAMP COUNSELOR*** AND TRIED TO SACRIFICE ME TO ***ZUUL*** OR SOMETHING.

THE SOCIETY FOLLOWS THE TEACHINGS OF AN ALCHEMIST NAMED ***AKAKIOS***. HE BELIEVED THERE WERE TWO DISTINCT BREEDS OF HUMANITY: ONE SUPERIOR, POSSESSED OF HIGHER INTELLECT AND STRONG MORALITY. ANOTHER, INFERIOR, PRONE TO SIN AND DEBAUCHERY.

AKAKIOS POINTED TO "BACCHANALIA", RITUALS HELD BY ROMAN LIBERTINES IN PROTEST OF RESTRICTIVE SOCIAL LAWS, AS EVIDENCE. AMONG HIS FOLLOWERS, THESE "INFERIORS" BECAME KNOWN AS "CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS" AFTER THE GOD OF REVELRY AND WINE.

DURING ONE OF HIS TRAVELS, AKAKIOS DISCOVERED A SMALL AFRICAN TRIBE WHOM REGULARLY USED A PLANT WITH MANY UNUSUAL PROPERTIES.

WHEN BURNED, IT CREATED A BLACK FLAME. AND WHEN ITS NECTAR WAS INJECTED INTO A CORPSE, THE BODY WOULD REGAIN A SEMBLANCE OF LIFE. THE PLANT WAS USED RESPECTFULLY, AND IN MODERATION.

INEVITABLY, THE PLANT'S EFFECT ON THE BRAIN WORE OFF, LEAVING ONLY A STARVING, UNLIVING BEAST THAT FED UPON LIVING FLESH.

AKAKIOS DESTROYED THE TRIBE, TAKING THE SECRET OF THE PLANT, WHICH HE CALLED **BLACK AMBROSIA**, WITH HIM BACK TO GREECE.

AKAKIOS SYNTHESIZED A CHEMICAL FROM THE FLOWER, WHICH HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS INGESTED. AKAKIOS' ALCHEMY WOULD ALLOW THE MOST DEVOTE AMONG THE BELIEVERS TO RETURN TO LIFE AFTER DEATH, AS TRUE PALADINS OF THEIR BELIEFS.

THE BLACK FLAME OF THE BURNING AMBROSIA BECAME THE SYMBOL OF AKAKIOS' DEVOUT FOLLOWERS. THEY BELIEVED IT SHED A LIGHT ONLY THEY COULD SEE THAT WOULD LEAD THEM THROUGH THE DARKNESS OF AN APOCALYPSE CAUSED BY THE REIGN OF THE "LAWLESS" CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS.

THEY WOULD LIVE AGAIN, STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE, SOME WITH BIZARRE POWERS AND ABILITIES LIKE THE ROMAN GODS OF MYTH, TO DESTROY THE CHILDREN OF DIONYSUS AND SAVE THE WORLD.

THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY OF TODAY EXISTS TO HELP ITS PALADINS ACCOMPLISH THEIR INTENDED TASK AND ENSURE A PERFECT WORLD FOR AKAKIOS' REBIRTH. THESE PALADINS ARE THOSE WHO HAVE THE NECTAR OF THE BLACK AMBROSIA RUNNING THROUGH THEIR VEINS, EVEN AFTER MANY GENERATIONS.

THOSE YOU CALL ***SLASHERS***. YOUR MOTHER, DELILAH HACK.

AND YOU, CASSANDRA HACK.

WE ARE TO BELIEVE THIS BOWL OF SHIT?!

VLAD! *STOP!*

LOOK, IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S TRUE OR NOT. THE ASSHOLES THAT TIED ME TO A TREE BELIEVED IT. THEY CALLED ME A DAUGHTER OF DIONYSUS AND CALLED SLASHERS "PALADINS."

WE'VE GOT A NEW PAIN IN OUR COLLECTIVE ASSES, AND THIS FREAK IS AN EXPERT IN THEM.

HE GIVES ME A BAD FEELING.

VLAD DOESN'T LIKE YOU, SO ***I*** DON'T LIKE YOU. IF YOU DO ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS, VLAD, I, OR ***BOTH*** OF US WILL PERFORATE YOU.

BUT, WE'RE GOING TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR FRIEND, BECAUSE THE MORE I KNOW ABOUT SLASHER-WORSHIPPING OFFICE JOCKEYS, THE BETTER OFF I AM.

ARE WE *CLEAR?*

A TENSE AND DISTRUSTFUL ALLIANCE OF CONVENIENCE...

I EXPECTED NOTHING LESS.

ELSEWHERE.

HELP ME PLEASE, GOD. I AIN'T NEVER ASKED FOR MUCH, SO JUST DO ME THIS ONE SOLID...

SHIT! FUCK YOU, *RODIN!*

I DID WHAT YOU ASKED, DIDN'T I? YOUR BOY, SAMHAIN IS PROBABLY ON HIS WAY HERE RIGHT NOW.

WHY'D YOU PUT ME IN HERE WITH THESE GOD DAMNED THINGS?!

PHREEEEEET!

F-FUCK IT.

FINE. I'M SICK OF RUNNING. Y'ALL CAN HAVE ME. YOU CAN CHOKE ON MY SKINNY ASS.

ALL I GOT TO ASK... BEFORE YOU EAT ME, Y'ALL GOT TO KILL ME.

PHREEEEE.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

PHREEET!

HEHEE HEE HEE HEE.

AAAAHHHH!

AAAIIIIEEEE!!!

SRRRIP!

YOU LAUGHING SOULLESS BASTARDS...

ALL I ASKED WAS YOU KILL ME...

JESUS CHRIST. WHAT KIND OF SICK BASTARD IS GOING TO WANT TO WATCH THAT?

IT'S FOOTAGE LIKE THIS THAT MAKES THE ***ARTEMIS SERIES*** OUR BEST SELLER, MR. WEINBERG.

I SUPPOSE. MORE MONEY TO BE MADE IN ***WAR*** THAN ***LOVE.***

ME, I'LL TAKE THE SMALLER PAYCHECK, THE CLEANER CONSCIENCE, AND MORE ***SEX.***

SPEAKING OF, YOU MIND IF I TAKE THIS NEW ***VENUS MODEL*** FOR A SPIN?

I CAN'T VERY WELL SELL IT IF I HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED THE NEW FEATURES FIRST HAND, RIGHT?

OF COURSE. *VENUS TWELVE*... GIVE GIL A 'TOUR.'

THANKS, *RODIN*. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU SOCIETY GUYS STOP YOURSELF FROM "GETTING HIGH ON YOUR OWN SUPPLY."

IT TAKES A BETTER MAN THAN I TO RESIST THE PLEASURES OF A LITTLE SIN.

SINCE I'M QUITE SURE *VENUS TWELVE* WILL BLOW THE PATHETIC MIND OF MR. WEINBERG, I THINK IT'S TIME FOR A CELEBRATORY DINNER IN HONOR OF YOUR *EXCELLENT* WORK.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT...

...MS. PARK?

AAAAAHHHHHHH!!!!

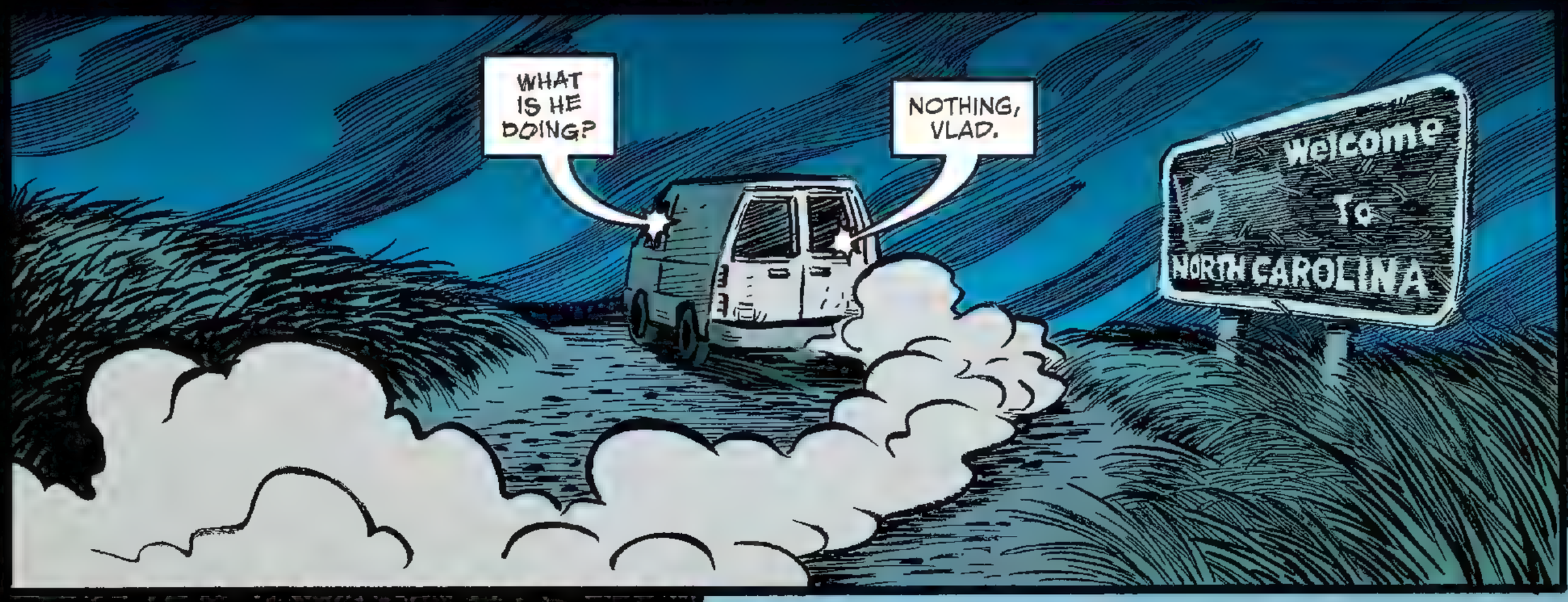
OH SHIT. SHIT SHIT SHIT!

WHAT IS IT? FUCKIN' CHUCKY? SLASHER-KYLE?

Loyal Pooch will defend you with his trusty bag of bowling!

CHRIS...

WE HAVE TO TALK.


WHAT IS HE DOING?
NOTHING, VLAD.
Welcome To NORTH CAROLINA

YOU JUST KEEP DRIVING.

I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON SAMHAIN.

SAMHAIN. YOU MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE...

AMMO

NNNNGH!

WHAT? WHAT IS--

AVA.

WE ARE HERE.

ALL RIGHT, WHAT KIND OF MESSED UP CULT COMPOUND DID YOU BRING US TO?

IT IS ACTUALLY QUITE PLEASANT, YES?

CEDAR ISLAND
PRIVATE RESERVE
NO TRESPASSING

ACCORDING TO MY CONTACT, THEY ARE HOLDING AVA IN A LAB, DISGUISED AS A LUXURY HOME WITHIN THE FOREST RESERVE.

IF WE CROSS TO THE ISLAND FROM HERE, WE HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF AVOIDING BEING DETECTED.

HERE. IF YOU WALK IN FRONT OF US, I WILL ALLOW YOU TO CARRY THIS GUN.

I HAVE NEED OF ONLY ONE WEAPON.

HUR HUR HUR. ONE SMALL KNIFE IS NOT ENOUGH.

ACTUALLY I'VE SEEN HIM USE IT. HE'S RIGHT. HE ONLY NEEDS ONE WEAPON.

AIIIIEEEEEE!

WHAT THE HELL WAS *THAT?*

IT WAS HUMAN.

THIS WAY!

AIIIEEEE!!

GHAH! A FUCKIN' ELF!

AIIEEEEE!! AIEEEE!!

IT IS COMING FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FENCE...

WHAT'S WRONG?!

AIEEE!! AIEE!

PHREEEEET!

WAIT!

VLAD! MAKE A HOLE IN THIS FUCKING FENCE!

WHOA!

WHAP!

I'VE GOT HER.

BZZZZT!

SOON.

CHRIST, MARY LOU RETTON! YOU COULDA TOLD US YOU COULD DO THAT!

I'VE FOUND THE GIRL.

SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD WHEN I GOT TO HER. WHATEVER DID IT RAN OFF WHEN I APPROACHED. IT WAS LAUGHING.

JESUS. SHE... SOMETHING *ATE* HER.

WHAT... WHAT THE HELL DID *THAT?*

HURRRM.

WHATEVER IT WAS IT MOVED FAR TOO FAST FOR A BEAR OR A WOLF. THE GIRL DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE.

THIS GIRL. SHE IS NOT JUST A GIRL.

SHE HAS, URRRR, BOTH BOY *AND* GIRL PARTS.

OKAY, THIS IS STARTING TO FREAK *ME* OUT.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

TO BE CONTINUED!

LANTERN INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY.

A FRONT COMPANY MAINTAINED BY THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

TWO YEARS AGO.

AND THERE'S NO CHANGE IN SAMHAIN'S CONDITION?

NO, SIR. HE'S BACK TO HIS FORMER, PROGRAMMABLE SELF. HE'S BEEN FOLLOWING ALL THE COMMANDS IN THE TESTS.

GOOD. WE'LL HAVE TO CHALK UP HIS LITTLE REBELLION TO THE FACT THAT THE PALADINS ARE, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, EXTREMELY INDEPENDENT.

I LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT AKAKIOS GIVES US UNPREDICTABLE CHALLENGES TO TEST OUR FAITH.

HA HA. YOU HAVE A UNIQUE VIEW OF OUR SAVIOR, *MS. PARK*, JUST AS YOUR MOTHER DID.

WILL YOU BE ATTENDING TONIGHT'S SERVICE? WE'RE WELCOMING BROTHER RODIN FROM THE SONS OF MAN PROJECT WITH A SPECIAL SACRIFICE.

NO. I HAVE SOME DATA TO LOG, AND I'D LIKE TO GET THAT DONE BEFORE SAMHAIN'S NEXT MISSION.

YOU ***ARE*** YOUR MOTHER'S DAUGHTER. DON'T WORK TOO HARD. SOMETIMES NOTHING IS BETTER FOR ONE OF THE FAITHFUL THAN TO WEAR THE MASK AND WATCH A ***CHILD OF BACCHUS*** BLEED INTO THE NIGHT.

GOOD NIGHT, MS. PARK.

IS HE GONE?

YES.

GOOD. SET ME FREE.

NOT JUST YET.

CEDAR ISLAND RESERVE, NORTH CAROLINA.

NOW.

YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED YOUR FOOD.

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU MAKE ME SICK TO MY STOMACH.

IS THIS STILL ABOUT *VENUS NINE*? BY GOD, PARK. I'LL JUST HAVE A NEW ONE SENT OVER.

THE ARTEMIS BOYS HADN'T HAD A GOOD HUNT IN DAYS. BESIDES, SHE WAS STARTING TO LOOK HER AGE. WHAT GOOD IS A SHOW MODEL SEX SLAVE WITH WRINKLES?

DAMN IT, THIS IS THE CAM REMOTE... WHERE'S THE UNIVERSAL?

I WISH YOU HAD JUST KILLED ME.

DON'T LEAVE NOW.

THE BIG SHOW IS ABOUT TO START...

AND I BELIEVE YOU HAVE A HORSE IN THIS RACE.

SO, SAM, I'VE GOT TO ASK...

WHEN YOU INVITED US ALONG FOR THIS RIDE, DID YOU KNOW WE WERE GONNA BE GETTING "HUNGRY EYES"...

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

FROM WHATEVER THE FUCK *THOSE* ARE?

NO. I FEEL CERTAIN THAT, HAD I EVER ENCOUNTERED THINGS LIKE THIS BEFORE, I WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED IT.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

OKAY. ALL I KNOW IS THAT I HATE THEM ALREADY. PLUG YOUR EARS...

I'M GONNA MAKE A HOLE.

BOOM!

WHA--?

PHREEEEE!

PHREEE!

FUCK! FAST MOTHER-- *GAH!*

AHHH!

CHOK!!

UHN! NEED... A... WEAPON.

CHOMP!

SHRED!

SHUK

HOLY...

HURRN?

PHREEEE!

GHRRUUH!

PHREEEE!!

NO. YOU. WILL...

NOT!

PHREE--!

SNAP!

GHRAAAH!

SWOK!

HUUR. THEY WORK AS A TEAM... WE MUST.

RRUUGHRRR.

HEE HEE HEE.

CRIK!

AAAHHHH...

PUNT!

HUNH! THAT FUCKING *HURT!!*

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

PHREEEE!

KLICK!

AW, FUCK ME.

PHREE!

GRAH!

THUK!

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

GHRAAAHH!

HUHN!

THUK!

YES!

DID YOU SEE THAT, PARK? NOT ONLY ARE THEY THE MOST EFFECTIVE PREDATORS THAT NATURE NEVER MADE, BUT THEY FOLLOW ORDERS *AND* USE TOOLS.

IT'S THE BEST BATCH YET. I CAN THANK YOU FOR THAT. IF YOU WEREN'T, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, MY SLAVE, I'D GIVE YOU A BONUS.

IT WAS YOU WHO SET OLD SAMHAIN FREE, AND WITH A LITTLE INCENTIVE FROM ME, YOU HELPED BRING HIM BACK INTO THE FOLD. HEY, MAYBE THE SOCIETY WILL CALL IT EVEN.

I'M SETTING YOUR IMPLANT TO KEEP YOU HERE. I DON'T WANT YOU ANYWHERE NEAR SAMHAIN UNTIL I'M DONE.

SO, ENJOY WATCHING THE BOYS FINISH OFF THE HACK WOMAN AND HER PARTNER. I'LL CATCH THE RERUN LATER.

VENUS TWELVE, YOU MAY EAT NOW.

BUT NOT TOO MUCH. A FAT SEX SLAVE IS AS USELESS AS A WRINKLED ONE.

IT'S TIME.

SAM!

HEE HEE HEE.

GHA! HOW MANY OF THESE THINGS ARE THERE?!

SHIT. SHIT!!

LEAVE HER!

WE MUST RUN.

WE ARE OUT OF WEAPONS. WE ARE HURT. THEY ARE TOO MANY.

KISS IT

BUT, THEY'VE GOT SAMHAIN.

YOU SAW HIM FIGHT. YOU SAW HIM INJURED. AND YET, STILL HE FOUGHT.

HE USES A BLADE. HE WEARS A MASK. HE DOES NOT FEEL PAIN AS WE DO.

SAMHAIN IS A SLASHER.

I WILL NOT LET YOU BE MEAT FOR THESE WOLF-DOG-MAN... THINGS.

SAMHAIN WILL FEND FOR HIMSELF.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

FARM ROAD POND.

HEY, POOCH.

If it would please you, Master, you can throw this grotesque dead plant stem, and loyal Pooch will hunt it down and bring it back to you.

IT SOUNDS LESS FUN WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY.

Humble Pooch thinks maybe you are not so excited that you have impregnated Mistress Lisa, and that She will soon bear your love-spawn.

YEAH, *THAT* ALSO SOUNDS LESS FUN THE WAY YOU SAY IT.

On my world of Nef, days of birthing are days of great terror and pain. The fierce Neflords are unable to breed between each other, thus they must capture virgin otherworlders to fill with their seed.

My own mother was likely a lowly dog similar to the ones Mistress Lisa helps.

I have seen many other lowbeast birthed. The impregnated one always explodes in a shower of intestines and blood. This is what happened to Pooch's mother...

POOCH?

Yes, Master?

DON'T *EVER* TELL ME THAT STORY AGAIN.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

LOWER WEST SIDE.

EL AGUAGE BAR.

HEY, GRINGA!

TEQUILA.

ÁNDALE!

GRINGA? I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR BEING THE ONLY WHITE GIRL WORKING IN A MEXICAN BAR.

NICE SHIRT, JUAN. DIDN'T KNOW YOU WENT IN FOR THAT SUPERSTITIOUS STUFF.

EH, I DON'T USUALLY. BUT EVERYONE SAYS *LA SANTA MUERTE* HAS COME TO CHICAGO. I FIGURE, IF SHE'S THAT CLOSE BY, WEARING THIS SHIRT MIGHT BRING ME A LITTLE LUCK.

doot deet doot

MONICA. EVERYTHING COOL?

MNUUUUUHHHHNNNN.

UHM, THAT DEPENDS, LIBBY. DOES YOUR VERSION OF "COOL" INCLUDE AN *UNDEAD KILLER* MOANING AND FLOPPING AROUND IN THE BATHTUB?

AW, CRAP. I'LL BE THERE IN A SECOND...

WHAT, YOU'RE LEAVING?

AN... UH, EMERGENCY CAME UP. THE BAR IS YOURS UNTIL I GET BACK!

HEH. GRACIAS, SANTA MUERTE.

GODDAMN IT! WHERE THE HELL IS THAT FUCKING FENCE?!

THEY ARE MAKING US RUN IN CIRCLES. WHEN WE GO IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, THEY RUN AHEAD OF US, FORCE US BACK, YES?

OKAY. THEN THAT'S IT.

WHAT?

WE'RE DONE, VLAD.

SO... WE WILL GO OUT TOGETHER, FIGHTING THEM UNTIL THEY KILL US.

AND THEN EAT US. YEP. YOU'RE GODDAMN RIGHT.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

CASSANDRA. I... I WOULD LIKE...

I WANT TO APOLOGIZE.

FOR WHAT?

BECAUSE. I WAS HAPPY AT YOUR SADNESS. I KNOW TELLING GEORGIA YOU COULD NOT BE HER LOVE HURT YOU VERY MUCH. BUT IT MADE ME VERY HAPPY.

AND BEING HAPPY ABOUT THAT HAS MADE ME SAD.

I KNOW I AM NOT YOUR BOYFRIEND. I AM NOT THE PERSON YOU WILL MARRY OR MAKE THE SEX WITH.

BUT I DO NOT LIKE TO SHARE YOU, CASSANDRA. I DO NOT LIKE TO SHARE YOU WITH ANYONE.

I KNOW.

PHREEE!

WHAT THE HELL--?

COME! NOW!

SQUEEE! SQUEE!!

HERE YA GO, BOYS. I KNOW THE ONLY THING YOU LIKE MORE THAN PORK IS TORMENTING AND KILLING THE INNOCENT.

SQUEEE!!

A REWARD FOR A JOB WELL DONE.

SQUEEEE!

HEE HEE HEE.

SAMHAIN. THE PUMPKIN-FACED DEMON. THE JACK O'LANTERN ASSASSIN. THE BLACK LAMP'S PET PALADIN.

I'M NOT IMPRESSED.

FZZZT

HURRRRNGH!!

WHY THEY WENT TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF GETTING YOU BACK, I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND. BUT THEN, I NEVER DO GET THESE RELIGIOUS TYPES.

WITH THEM IT'S ALL ABOUT TRADITION AND RITUAL. "DON'T THINK TOO MUCH, FOLLOW THE RULES, AND SHUT UP..."

I MEAN, SURE, I'LL WORK FOR 'EM. BUT WHEN I'VE RETIRED AND BOUGHT MYSELF A REMOTE TROPICAL ISLAND, IT WON'T MATTER IF I WORKED FOR THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY OR THE BLACK AND DECKER CORPORATION.

UNGK!

SHUK!

OF COURSE, IF I'D SPENT MY LIFE ENGINEERING CORDLESS VACUUMS, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN TO INDULGE MY SADISTIC SIDE QUITE SO MUCH.

NOW, APPARENTLY, IT WAS "LOVE" THAT BROKE YOU OUT OF THE "STAB-ANY-BITCH-AROUND" TRANCE THAT THE SOCIETY SO APPRECIATED.

I'LL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT DR. PARK IS A FINE PIECE OF ASS. BUT I THINK I KNOW WHAT WILL DESTROY THE LAST LITTLE SHRED OF HUMANITY THAT SHE SO KINDLY INVIGORATED WITH HER WONDERFUL WOMANHOOD.

AND THAT'S HEAPS AND PILES AND COPIOUS AMOUNTS...

OF PAIN.

TINKERBELL! SLOW DOWN... JUST... A SECOND.

JUST... A... SEC--

CASSANDRA!

SHE HAS LOST MUCH BLOOD. SHE IS WEAK.

IT'S... OKAY. WE HAVE A GOOD LEAD ON THE ARTEMIS, AND WE CAN SEE THEM APPROACH FROM THIS HILL. ATTEND TO HER.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

MAN... I ALMOST DON'T WANT TO KNOW.

I BELIEVE YOU KNOW OF THE *BLACK LAMP SOCIETY.*

HUNH... FUCK THOSE... ASSHOLES...

THE SOCIETY HAS LONG SPONSORED HUMAN BREEDING EXPERIMENTS. THEIR EARLIEST ATTEMPTS WERE IN PURSUIT OF MORE INTELLIGENT AND "MORALLY" PRONE INDIVIDUALS TO "PURIFY" THEIR RANKS FOR THE COMING APOCALYPSE. TO THEM, THE EXPERIMENTS WERE NO MORE INHUMANE THAN BREEDING FOR A BETTER LAP DOG OR A MEATIER COW.

OVER A THOUSAND YEARS OF CONTROLLED MATING, THEY CREATED SEVERAL SPECIALIZED HUMAN BREEDS. THEY CALLED THESE CREATURES THE "SONS OF MAN." THE **POSEIDON** WAS ABLE TO HOLD ITS BREATH AND SWIM UNNATURALLY WELL. THE **HADES** COULD SEE IN THE DARK. BUT THEIR MOST SUCCESSFUL CREATIONS WERE THE **ARTEMIS**, BRED AS HUNTERS AND KILLERS, AND THE **VENUS**, BRED AS COMPANIONS AND SEX SLAVES.

SALES OF THE ARTEMIS AND VENUS PROVIDED THE SOCIETY WITH AMPLE FUNDING. WEALTHY HEDONISTS PURCHASED HAREMS OF PERFECT LOVERS, WHILE GOVERNMENTS AND MILITARIES EMPLOYED ARTEMIS SQUADS TO HUNT DOWN THEIR ENEMIES. AND AS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EVOLVED, SO, TOO, DID THESE SONS OF MAN.

TEN YEARS AGO, THE SOCIETY HIRED **ANDREW RODIN**, A BIOGENETICIST WHO HAD SPECIALIZED IN SHEEP BREEDING IN HIS NATIVE NEW ZEALAND.

THERE ARE BREEDING AND NURTURING SITES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, BUT RODIN FOUNDED THIS LOCATION TO DEVELOP HIS OWN SPECIAL PRODUCTS. HERE HE GUIDED THE EUGENICS PROGRAM TO NEW HEIGHTS, FORGING A STRONGER, MORE LETHAL BREED OF ARTEMIS, AND "SPECIAL ORDER" VENUS MODELS, CUSTOMIZED TO THE BUYER'S DESIRES.

HUUURM, THIS IS WHY THE LAST VENUS GIRL HAD A... URRMM...

BIG FAT ELF COCK.

AVA PARK WAS A SOCIETY BIOLOGIST WHO BECAME DISENCHANTED WITH THE GROUP'S GOALS. SHE USED HER JOB AS CARETAKER OF THE BLACK LAMP'S CHIEF ASSASSIN, THE PALADIN SAMHAIN, TO EXPERIMENT WITH A PROCESS TO CURE THESE MURDEROUS "PURIFIERS." SAMHAIN HAD BEEN CONDITIONED TO RESPOND TO COMMANDS FROM KEY FIGURES IN THE SOCIETY HIERARCHY.

BY CONDITIONING HIM TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO AFFECTION, SEX, AND EMOTION, AVA WAS ABLE TO SUBVERT THE HATRED AND RAGE THAT NORMALLY FUELED HIS ACTIONS. SHE ALLOWED HIM TO REGAIN HIS SOUL.

AVA INTENDED TO RELEASE SAMHAIN, BUT THE SOCIETY DISCOVERED HER PLOT. SAMHAIN ESCAPED IN THE ENSUING CONFRONTATION. HE BELIEVED AVA PARK TO BE DEAD.

IN TRUTH, THE SOCIETY DID NOT WANT TO WASTE AVA'S MIND. SHE WAS GIVEN OVER TO THE CUSTODY OF ANDREW RODIN, WHO ENSURED HER COMPLACENCY AND COOPERATION THROUGH THE USE OF AN IMPLANT HE CONTROLLED.

RODIN SET AVA TO WORK ON A NEW FEATURE FOR THE VENUS: ENCODED, PROGRAMMABLE PERSONALITY AND MEMORY TRAITS. THIS WOULD ALLOW FOR MODELS THAT COULD EMBODY A BUYER'S SPECIFIC FANTASY. THEY COULD ACT AS A CELEBRITY OR AN EX-LOVER, BELIEVING THEMSELVES TO BE THE ORIGINAL. BUT AVA USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE ONE MODEL THE ABILITY TO SPEAK AND THINK. AVA SHARED EVERYTHING SHE KNEW WITH THIS MODEL SO THAT, WHEN SHE CHOSE TO ENACT HER PLAN, SHE WOULD HAVE AN ALLY IN SYNC WITH HER EVERY MOVE.

THAT ALLY IS YOU.

AVA HAS SENT ME TO HELP YOU, AND TO ENLIST YOUR AID IN ACCOMPLISHING OUR... *HER* PLAN. WE MUST KILL ANDREW RODIN, FREE SAMHAIN, AND DESTROY THE SONS OF MAN PROGRAM.

WAIT... SO ALL THIS TIME WE'RE KILLIN' SLASHERS, AND, APPARENTLY, I SHOULDA BEEN MAKING OUT WITH 'EM?

SAMHAIN IS A UNIQUE CASE. AVA SAW SOMETHING IN HIM THAT SHE HADN'T SEEN IN ANY OF THE OTHER PALADINS: A SPARK OF HUMANITY. A SOUL.

YOU SPEAK OF HIM AFFECTIONATELY. YOU KNOW HIM?

NO. I'VE NEVER MET HIM.

FOR ALL THE OTHER VENUS, IT WAS EASY TO PLAY OUR INTENDED ROLE. THEY'RE PROGRAMMED FOR SEX AND NOTHING ELSE. BUT FOR ME, IT WAS MORE... DIFFICULT.

EVERY TIME I ENTERTAINED A CLIENT FOR RODIN, I THOUGHT OF AVA. HOW SHE CHANGED EVERYTHING SHE HAD BELIEVED IN WHEN SHE FOUND THAT SPARK. I IMAGINED THAT SOMEDAY I, TOO, WOULD FIND THAT--

THEY'RE HERE.

GET A HEAD START! I'LL WAIT UNTIL ENOUGH OF THEM GET CLOSE TO ME--

BU

SHUNK

AGHK!

HEE HEE.

SUNGHS

YOU WILL NOT HAVE HER!

PHREEEEE!

HEE HEE HEE.

PHREEEE!

GHRAH!

DID YOU KNOW THEY SHOT ARROWS?!

KRUUH!

THEY... THEY BUILT TOOLS...

HEE HEE.

KRRASH!

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
UKRAINIAN VILLAGE.
DON'TSCREAMDON'T SCREAMDON'TSCREAM DON'TSCREAM...
DON'TSCREAMDON'T SCREAMDON'TSCREAM DON'TSCREAM...
RAAAAH!
AAAAIIIEEEE!!
OH GOD, OH GOD...
MONICA!
ezeerf dna reh pord nam ciasom!
UNHUH... I WAS SO SCARED.
SHHH... HE'S FROZEN IN PLACE. HE CAN'T HURT YOU NOW.
I PROMISE.

ELF, IF YOU'VE GOT ANY MORE KEEBLER MAGIC TO USE...

NOW WOULD BE A *GREAT* TIME.

THERE!!! GO THAT WAY!!

WAIT... WE'RE DELIBERATELY GOING INTO *THIS?!*

YES.

WHAT... IS THIS?

THEY WON'T ATTACK US HERE. THIS IS THEIR SACRED GROUND.

HEE HEE.

HEE HEE HEE HEE.

HEE HEE HEE.

HIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

HIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

JESUS. THEY'RE RELIGIOUS.

HIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

IT'S HUMAN NATURE TO PONDER WHAT OUR PURPOSE IS AND WHO CREATED US. THE SONS OF MAN ARE HUMAN, TOO, EVEN IF THEY ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER TO BOTH OF THOSE QUESTIONS.

PARK! COME DOWN TO THE LAB.

I EVEN TURNED OFF YOUR IMPLANT.

YOU CAN COME INTO THE LAB TO SEE YOUR OLD BOYFRIEND'S MAKEOVER WITHOUT DOING THE "ELECTRIC SLIDE."

RODIN?

RAAAAH!

AHK!

SHUNK

PARK. REALLY?

IT'S BAD ENOUGH YOU TURNED VENUS TWELVE INTO YOUR LITTLE B.F.F. SO YOU COULD DESTROY MY OPERATION. BUT, SERIOUSLY... YOU WERE GOING TO STAB ME? AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU?

COME ON, PARK. I APPRECIATE THE "HELP" YOU'VE GIVEN ME. BUT THE TRUTH IS: THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY ONLY WANTED YOU ALIVE FOR ONE REASON.

THEY KNEW THAT, SOONER OR LATER, I'D BRING SAMHAIN BACK INTO THE FOLD. WHEN I DID, THEY WANTED ME TO ENSURE HE PASSED *ONE*, VERY IMPORTANT *PRODUCT TEST*.

HE HAS TO *KILL* YOU.

IN THE NAME OF THE DARK FLAME THAT LED YOU AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE, I COMMAND YOU.

KILL AVA PARK.

EERRNNGGGHH.

IN THE NAME OF THE DARK FLAME THAT LED YOU AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE, I COMMAND YOU!

ERRNNGHH... NO...

UNGK!

IN THE NAME OF THE DARK FLAME THAT LED YOU AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE, I COMMAND YOU!

IN THE NAME OF THE DARK FLAME THAT LED YOU AWAY FROM DEATH'S EMBRACE...

SET... ME... FREE.

I COMMAND YOU!!

AAAAHHHGH!

SKUK!

AAAAAND CUT!

THE SOCIETY WILL SHIT THEIR LITTLE BLACK ROBES WHEN THEY SEE--

WOOOTWOOTWOOT

HACK, THE MONSTER, AND THE LITTLE TRAITOROUS SLUT. RIGHT ON TIME.

HEY, SAMMIE. READY TO SHOOT ANOTHER SCENE?

KRAK!

IS A MR. RODIN HOME, YES?

HEE HEE.

HEE HEE HEE.

OH, FOR THE LOVE OF--! MORE OF THESE THINGS?

THESE ARE PLUMP AND SOFT. A PERFECT TIME FOR BUTCHERING, YES?

FIND SAMHAIN! THE DOGGIES ARE MINE!

SAM? WE'RE TAKING YOU AND YOUR GIRL HOME--

OH.

AVA!!

WAIT! THAT'S A REALLY CLEAN KNIFE WOUND. YOU KNOW WHO'S REALLY GOOD WITH A KNIFE...?

SWOK!

UNGH!

GHYAH!

SHING!

WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE BACK-STABBING CUM DUMPSTER.

=HNNH=

I'M GOING TO FILM WHAT I DO TO YOU. NOT BECAUSE IT'LL HELP SELL ANYTHING. NO, NO. THIS IS FOR MY *PERSONAL COLLECTION.*

SAM! WHAT'D YOU *DO*, MAN?! YOU KILLED *AVA PARK!*

HRRAAGH!

SHHNK

HRRAH!

YOU KILLED THE GIRL YOU CAME HERE TO SAVE! YOU'RE A GODDAMN SLASHER LIKE ALL THE OTHER GODDAMN SLASHERS!

YOU FUCKING IDIOT. YOU GAVE ME HOPE. FOR ONE SECOND, I BELIEVED. GODDAMN YOU, I HAVE TO KILL YOU! I HAVE--

AGH!

MMF!

ƎNNNHƎ ALRIGHT, SAM. LET'S SEE HOW "UNIQUE" OF A CASE YOU REALLY ARE...

COME ON, TWELVE. WHY ARE YOU PUTTING UP A FIGHT? YOU WERE BUILT TO SAY "YES."

"YES, THANK YOU. MAY I HAVE ANOTH--"

ERK!?

CHUK!!

GLLUGH!!

UH...

AVA... I...

NO.

TALK TO ME, MOTHER-FUCKER! DO I HAVE TO SMASH THE PUMPKIN?!

NO... I AM CLEAR. I SEE WHAT I HAVE DONE. I WAS CONTROLLED. I AM NO LONGER.

ARE YOU BACK TO ZEN-MAN, OR IS SLASHER-SAM STILL IN THE HOUSE?

YOU HAVE HELPED ME REGAIN MY SENSES. BUT, YOU MUST LEAVE NOW. JUST FOR A BIT.

AND TAKE THE GIRL. NEITHER OF YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT I AM GOING TO DO TO *HIM*.

RODIN!

HAHA... =GLRKHUR= HAH!

HA... YOU IDIOT. YOU THINK THE BLACK LAMP WOULD LET THIS PLACE GET TAKEN? I'M WIRED, JUST LIKE AVA AND THE ARTEMIS.

OH GOD. WHEN HE DIES THE ISLAND WILL BURN.

HURR?

SHE'S RIGHT... =URGK= WHEN THIS OLD TICKER STOPS, THE BIG BLACK LAMP FIRES UP. SO, GO AHEAD. KILL ME.

WE'VE BOTH DONE SOME PRETTY HORRIBLE THINGS IN OUR LIVES. SHIT, YOU'VE DONE ***WORSE*** THAN ME. WE CAN BURN IN HELL ***TOGETHER***. =KAFF=

YOU CAN BURN ALONE.

HAHAHA... URGHKK--

JESUS! HE'S FIREBOMBING THE WHOLE THING!

WHAT ABOUT THE ARTEMIS?

"THEIR IMPLANTS WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO LEAVE THE ISLAND...

"THE CONFLAGRATION IS MEANT TO COVER THEIR EXISTENCE FROM FIREMEN AND POLICE...

HIIIEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

PRAY IT WILL DO ITS JOB.

C'MON. I'M FREEZING, AND IT'S GONNA BE A LONG SWIM AROUND THE ISLAND BACK TO THE VAN.

LATER.

HELLO? UH, EXCUSE ME? THE BATHROOM IS SINGLE-OCCUPANCY ONLY. AND, UM, YOU HAVE TO BUY THAT STUFF BEFORE YOU TAKE IT IN THERE.

HEY, FUCK OFF. WE'RE HAVING SOME WOMEN'S ISSUES IN HERE, OKAY?

DAMN, THAT WAS A HELL OF A HOLE. YOU'VE GOT AN IMPRESSIVE PAIN TOLERANCE, KEEBLER.

VENUS MODELS ARE MADE TO FEEL LESS PAIN. SOME OF OUR CLIENTS LIKE TO... WELL, THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST NOW.

I SAW YOU AND SAMHAIN TALKING IN THE VAN. WHAT'S THE PLAN?

HE AND I WILL FIND THE OTHER LABS. WE WILL DESTROY THE SONS OF MAN PROGRAM.

AND GENERALLY PISS OFF THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY?

YES.

I'M ALL FOR IT. BUT, THERE'S ONE THING...

I KNOW YOU SEE THAT SPARK INSIDE HIM. BUT IF HE GOES BAD, IF HE EVER HURTS AN INNOCENT AGAIN, YOU EXTINGUISH IT.

TAKE THIS.

DON'T YOU ***EVER*** TRUST SAMHAIN. HE'S A SLASHER. I DON'T CARE IF HE'S A SLASHER WITH A HEART, OR IF HE CAN CONTROL HIS RAGE. HE CAN BE USED. HE CAN BE CONTROLLED BY OTHERS. KEEP AN EYE OPEN, GOT ME?

AND IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT, YOU CALL ME.

WE'RE OUTTIE.

CASSANDRA, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU.

SAMHAIN AND THE VENUS. THEY ARE COMING WITH US?

JUST FOR A BIT. WE'RE DROPPING THEM OFF IN MYRTLE BEACH. THEY'VE GOT THEIR OWN MISSION THAT'S GOING TO TAKE THEM OUT OF OUR JURISDICTION.

AH. YES. HURRM OKAY... WE OUTTIE, YESP

VLAD.

WHAT YOU SAID BACK IN THE WOODS...

I... URRM... I THOUGHT WE WERE TO DIE.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. LOOK, YOU AND ME. NOTHING COMES BETWEEN THAT, OKAY? THERE'S NOT GONNA BE ANY MORE ROMANCE OR CRUSHES... IT'S JUST US. YOU'RE MY GUY.

HURR HURR HURR YES. AND YOU ARE MY CASSIE.

CASSIE.

FOR WHAT YOU DID... BACK THERE. YOUR KISS--

DON'T. I WAS JUST DOIN' WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.

THE END.

FOES AND FORTUNES

HACK/SLASH #26A by **TIM SEELEY & RACHELLE ROSENBERG**

WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF MIRACLES, THE FIRST PLACE THAT COMES TO MIND IS PROBABLY VATICAN CITY. MAYBE ISRAEL. SOME HOLY PLACE THAT BIRTHED A GREAT RELIGION.

THEY PROBABLY **DON'T** THINK OF **CHICAGO.**

BUT MIRACLES **DO** HAPPEN IN CHICAGO.

IN HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY RESTS THE GRAVE OF MARY ALICE QUINN. LITTLE MARY DIED YOUNG, BUT DURING HER SHORT LIFE SHE COULD HEAL THE SICK.

AFTER SHE DIED, HER RESTING PLACE BECAME A HOLY SITE. SOME SAY SHE STILL HEALS FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU, JUST LAST WEEK, A WOMAN IN ANDERSONVILLE FOUND A CORN CHIP SHAPED EXACTLY LIKE JESUS CHRIST. SHE SOLD THE HOLY SNACK ON EBAY FOR FOURTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS.

IN 2006, A WATER STAIN RESEMBLING THE VIRGIN MARY APPEARED UNDER THE KENNEDY EXPRESSWAY ON FULLERTON AVENUE.

PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER BROUGHT IT FLOWERS AND PRAYED TO IT. EVEN WHEN IT WAS PAINTED OVER, IT REAPPEARED.

SURE, IT'S EASY TO PLAY THESE KINDS OF THINGS OFF AS SUPERSTITION AND COINCIDENCE...

HELL, THERE'S EVEN A TERM FOR FINDING SIGNIFICANT FORMS IN RANDOM OBJECTS...LIKE, SAY, A LIME-SALSA RANCHERITO: **PAREIDOLIA.** GREAT WORD, ISN'T IT?

I GET IT. I UNDERSTAND WANTING TO SEE GOD IN YOUR CEREAL BOWL.

LIFE IS RANDOM. SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD. SOMETIMES IT'S NOTHING. AND SOMETIMES...WELL, SOMETIMES IT'S HEAPS AND HEAPS OF SHIT-BAD.

AND WHEN IT'S BAD, YOU REALLY WISH SOMEONE WAS OUT THERE, LOOKING AFTER YOU. WATCHING YOUR BACK. SOME FORCE BIGGER THAN YOU. WISER. ALL SEEING.

A GOD. AN ANGEL.

YOUR OWN PERSONAL SAINT.

CUMBERLAND, KENTUCKY.

tink

HM?

HYRAH!

SAMHAIN.

I'M A LIGHT SLEEPER.

CASSIE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO WAKE YOU.

I THOUGHT YOU LEFT ON YOUR MISSION.

I DID. BUT I CAME BACK. I CAME BACK FOR--

I KNOW WHY YOU CAME.

MMM.

NO...

LEAVE THE MASK ON.

CASSANDRA, I NEE--

OH.

OOOOOUUUUT!!!!

OH, WHAT HAVE I SEEN...?

YOU MAY COME IN NOW.

I...HURRR. I WAS GOING TO WALK TO THE GAS STATION TO GET US BREAKFAST. ON THE WAY, I REMEMBERED AN IMPORTANT QUESTION I WISHED TO ASK. THEN, I GOT COLD AND DECIDED TO COME BACK AND GET MY JACKET, YES?

YEAH, THAT EXPLAINS WHY I HAD LESS TIME THAN I THOUGHT.

SO...I DISTURBED YOU...HURRM... WHILE...HURRR--

WHILE I WAS DRILLING FOR MAIDEN WATER? YEAH. THANKS.

OHHH... HURRR.

OH PLEASE. GET OVER IT. IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVEN'T WALKED IN ON YOU WHILE YOU WERE "GOOGLING" YOURSELF.

WHAT?! I... *NO!* I NEVER--

HA! YOU LIE! AFTER WE CAME BACK FROM THE LESBIAN COLLEGE CASE, YOU COULDN'T LEAVE YOURSELF ALONE.

HURM. I STILL HAVE THE QUESTION...

WAY TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT, ONE-MAN-SHOW. FINE. ASK.

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WE FOUND CHILDREN WHO WERE EXPOSED TO THE BLACK FLAME LIQUID THAT CREATES THE SLASHERS.*

YOU DECIDED THAT THEY WERE A BIG RISK. THAT THEY WERE NOT FOR US TO HELP. SO YOU SHOT THEM. THEY WERE SLASHERS, AND DESTROYING SLASHERS IS WHAT WE DO. I HAVE COME TO ACCEPT THIS ANSWER.

YESTERDAY, WE LET THE MAN NAMED SAMHAIN GO, EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW THAT HE IS A SLASHER. EVEN IF HE IS TRYING TO BE A GOOD MAN, WE KNOW HE CAN BE CONTROLLED. WE SAW HIM KILL AN INNOCENT.**

SO, I MUST ASK...

*SEE H/S ISSUE #10, IN OMNIBUS VOL. 2.

**SEE H/S ISSUE #25.

WHY WAS SAMHAIN DIFFERENT FROM THE CHILDREN?

VLAD, I--

OH MY GOD.

HOLY SHIT, VLAD. LOOK!

NOW *YOU* ARE CHANGING THE SUBJECT!

NO, VLAD. IN THE NEWSPAPER...

TIZEN REPORTS
ANGE SIGHTINGS

LOOK!

'MEAT MAN' KILLER RETURNS?

LOCAL MAN WINS MEGALOTTO JACKPOT

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

'MEAT MAN' KILLER RETURNS?

I'LL BE DAMNED...

IT'S WORKING. I MEAN THE *WHOLE THING* IS WORKING, LIBBY.

I TOLD YA. MY SISTER MAY HAVE BEEN A PRISSY, JUDGMENTAL BITCH SOMETIMES, BUT SHE WOULD NEVER STEER ME WRONG.

WELL, I'M SURE MANUEL NAVARRO-MONTES' FAMILY APPRECIATES HER POST-MORTEM GIFTS. YOUR CHARMED SISTER SKULLHEAD GAVE HIM ENOUGH LUCK TO WIN 350,000 BIG ONES.

WHEN YA THINK MINE'S GONNA KICK IN?

DUNNO. MAYBE IT WORKS ON A NEED-BASED SCALE, Y'KNOW?

OL' MANUEL WAS GONNA LOSE HIS HOUSE, AND HIS DAUGHTER JUST GOT PREGNANT.

YOUR ONLY BAD LUCK IS THAT YOU ALWAYS MANAGE TO DATE TOTAL DOUCHE BAGS.

NUH-UH. I ALSO ALWAYS MANAGE TO PICK THE "L" CAR WITH THE HOMELESS GUY WHO JUST POOPED HIMSELF.

I'VE GOT BIGGER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW, MONNY. ANY DAY NOW, CASSIE HACK IS GONNA COME LOOKIN' FOR MISTER MEATMAN.

SO, YOU'RE...GOING THROUGH WITH IT?

MNUUUUHHHHNNNN.

THAT'S THE DEAL. I USED THE MAGIC TO DO SOME GOOD FOR PEOPLE IN NEED. IT'S ONLY FAIR I USE IT FOR ITS INTENDED PURPOSE, TOO.

CASSIE HACK AND HER PARTNER GOTTA DIE.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

ANIMAL SHELTER

WHOA! TURN IT DOWN A NOTCH, HACK.

I'M JUST SAYING: WHAT'S THE POINT OF A BACK-UP TEAM THAT DOESN'T BACK US UP?

LOOK, I WAS GOING TO CALL YOU ABOUT IT. I GOT A MESSAGE OFF MYSPACE FROM A GIRL WHO SAID SHE SAW THE MEATMAN AND THINKS SHE MIGHT KNOW WHERE HE LIVES. I WANTED TO VERIFY HER PROFILE FIRST.

WAIT. HACK/SLASH, INC. HAS A MYSPACE PAGE?

HURRM. HERE IS A DOLLAR FOR YOUR ROAD, YES?

JULIAN, THE MOSAIC MAN.

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. THE FIRST GUY YOU AND VLAD FACED AS A TEAM.* HE GAVE VLAD A BAD NAME UNTIL YOU PUSHED HIM IN FRONT OF A TRAIN.

WE'LL BE IN CHICAGO BY TONIGHT. TELL MS. MYSPACE WE'LL MEET HER.

AND A FACEBOOK ONE. WE NEED TO PUT YOU ON TWITTER SO YOU CAN TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU'RE KILLING EVERY FEW MINUTES.

IF I'M ON TWITTER ALL I'M KILLING ARE BRAIN CELLS.

ANYWAY, THIS "MONICA" CHECKS OUT. COLLEGE GIRL. ART INSTITUTE. LIKES CHUCK PALAHNIUK NOVELS AND ***SISTERS OF MERCY***. SAYS SHE SAW A GUY WITH A SEWN-UP FACE DUCK INTO A CONSTRUCTION AREA.

*SEE H/S ISSUE #1, IN OMNIBUS VOL. 2.

WILL DO. AND, HEY, I SHOULD PROBABLY TELL YOU: IT LOOKS LIKE HACK/SLASH, INC. IS GOING TO BE WELCOMING A LITTLE PINK BUNDLE OF JOY.

I THOUGHT POOCH WAS ALREADY AN OFFICIAL MEMBER.

NO, CASS. LISA AND I ARE PREGNANT.

OH GOD. I'M... I'M SO SORRY.

NO. SEE, IT'S A GOOD THING. IT'S BAD WHEN YOU'RE A TEENAGER, BUT FOR US, I MEAN, WE'RE EXCITED.

OH. REALLY? HUH.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH CHRIS AND MS. LISA?

TELL VLAD. HE'LL BE HAPPY.

CHRIS AND LISA ARE GOING TO HAVE A BABY.

WOOOOHOOOOO!!!!!

WE WILL PLAY GAMES AND READ CHIPPY THE CHIPMUNK AND THROW A BALL!

YEAH, HE'S HAPPY. SET UP THE MEETING WITH MONICA. WE'RE PUTTING JULIAN BACK IN HIS HOLE. CASSIE OUT.

VLAD WAS ECSTATIC AND CASS TREATED IT LIKE CANCER?

BINGO.

ABOUT WHAT I EXPECTED. I'LL MAKE SURE TO INVITE VLAD TO THE BABY SHOWER.

BABY SHOWER?

YEAH. WE'LL HAVE TO DO ALL THAT MOMMY AND DADDY STUFF NOW. COOL, HUH?

YEAH... COOL.

ELSEWHERE.

LIKE, *OMG* TIMES TEN.

hrrrrrrrm.

THIS PARK WAS TOTALLY GREEN AND HEALTHY LAST WEEK WHEN I FOUGHT *THE BEAVER* HERE, DWAYNE.*

*SEE H/S ENTRY WOUND.

AND THE ANIMALS DIDN'T LOOK ALL MELTED LIKE THE GUY AT THE END OF *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARC*. OR THAT TOXIC WASTE GUY FROM *ROBOCOP*, EVEN.

WASN'T THIS WHERE YOU SAW THE ANACHRONISTIC WOMAN WITH THE TENTACLES?

YUP.

THERE'S A STRANGE SLIME ON EVERYTHING. BIZARRE TEXTURE AND HUE. IT REMINDS ME OF "THE COLOUR--"

THE COLOR OF HAM, RIGHT?! Y'KNOW, WHEN IT HAS THAT WEIRD, IRIDESCENT SHEEN!

I WAS GOING TO SAY IT REMINDS ME OF "THE COLOUR OUT OF SPACE," A SHORT STORY BY H.P. LOVECRAFT.

OH, YEAH. OF COURSE.

AND HAM, TOO.

"JULIAN GALLO. THE MOSAIC MAN.

"JULIAN IS BORN IN CHICAGO, TO AN ABUSIVE FATHER. THE OLD MAN BEATS YOUNG JULES TOO HARD, TOO OFTEN, AND MESSES UP HIS FACE. BUT THE SCARS ON THE OUTSIDE AREN'T NEARLY AS DEEP AS THE ONES ON THE INSIDE. JULES IS ONE HEINOUS LITTLE BAD SEED.

"AS SOON AS HE CAN, HE STARTS WORK AS A LOW-RENT HIT MAN FOR THE LOCAL MOB. HE CONSIDERS HIS MURDERS WORKS OF ART. AROUND THIS TIME, JULES DECIDES HIS FACE'S BEAUTY SHOULD MATCH HIS WORK'S BEAUTY. HE BEGINS REMAKING HIS FACE INTO A MOSAIC, AS STRIKING AS THE ONES IN ANCIENT ROME.

"EVENTUALLY JULES RUNS AFOUL OF HIS OWN GANG. BUT HE DOES THE SLASHER DANCE AND COMES BACK FROM THE DEAD, KILLING HIS OLD BOSS AND MAKING A WEAPON OUT OF THE GUY'S BONES.

"THEN HE GOES TO TOWN, SLAUGHTERING EVERYONE RELATED TO THE OUTFIT'S RULING FAMILY...

JULIE'S ACTIONS START TO GET BLAMED ON A SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO "URBAN LEGEND" CALLED THE MEATMAN. THIS STORY BRINGS ONE SLASHER-HUNTING BABE TO TOWN...

CHICAGO

MEATMAN AND BABE TEAM UP, THROW JULIAN IN FRONT OF A TRAIN, AND YADA YADA YADA, THEY BECOME THE DYSFUNCTIONAL DUO YOU SEE HERE TODAY.

YOU FORGOT THE PART WHERE YOU HIT THE MEATMAN'S HEAD WITH A BAT. HURM.

SO JULIAN IS RUNNING AROUND CHICAGO AGAIN. A FEW PEOPLE SPOT HIM, AND SOME EAGER REPORTER DECIDES THE MEATMAN IS BACK. THIS LITTLE ART SCHOOL HONEY SEES HIM, THEN SENDS OUT A MESSAGE TO CHRIS.

SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO ME.

JULIAN WAS IN MANY PIECES. YET HE IS A SLASHER. TO COME BACK FROM RIDICULOUS DEATH IS WHAT HE IS MADE FOR, YES?

RIGHT. THAT PART I GET. BUT ALL THE LOCAL NEWS IN THE CHICAGO PAPERS AND ON THE NET IS JUST NORMAL STUFF: CROOKED POLITICS, BITCHING ABOUT POTHOLES, PEOPLE WINNING THE LOTTERY.

WHAT'S BUGGING ME IS, IF JULIAN HAS BEEN STALKING AROUND CHICAGO FOR A FEW DAYS...

U.S.

AUGUSTA BLVD.

THERE SHOULD'VE BEEN A LOT MORE MURDERS REPORTED.

UKRAINIAN VILLAGE, CHICAGO.

EVERYTHING READY?

IF YOU MEAN: "IS THE ZOMBIE PSYCHO OUT OF THE FRIDGE, AT MY COMMAND, AND READY TO KILL?" THEN, YES.

YOU KNOW, YOU'RE REALLY KIND OF AMAZING, LIBERTY.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. BUT THE VIRGIN MARY ROBE MAKES MY ASS LOOK SMALLER, DOESN'T IT?

NO, I MEAN...YOU'RE ALWAYS SURE YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING, Y'KNOW? IT DOESN'T MATTER IF IT'S WHERE YOU WORK, HOW YOU LIVE, OR THIS WHOLE CRAZY OCCULT REVENGE SHIT. YOU ALWAYS KNOW YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING. I *WISH* I WAS THAT COOL.

HEY, YOU'VE GOT A MAGICAL LUCK CHARM NOW. YOU'RE UNSTOPPABLE.

NOW GO BRING ME THOSE BAD GUYS.

SISTER SKULLHEAD, DON'T FAIL ME NOW.

THE NEUROLOGY CENTER. MARYLAND.

TONIGHT ON "LATE KNIGHT A.M." WE'LL BE DISCUSSING THE RASH OF SANTA MUERTE SIGHTINGS IN CHICAGO, ALL OF WHICH HAVE COINCIDED WITH UNUSUAL STREAKS OF GOOD LUCK...

SANTA MUERTE, OR SAINT DEATH, IS THE LATIN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS FIGURE, COMMONLY CONSIDERED A SAINT OF GOOD LUCK, DESPITE HER GRIM VISAGE. IN FACT, IN SOME ITERATIONS OF HER ORIGIN, SHE IS CONSIDERED THE VIRGIN MARY'S SISTER. INTERESTING TIDBIT THERE.

The Mystery Solver's Catalog, Inc.

SEVERAL EYEWITNESSES SAY THEY SAW THE SAINT IN THE PILSEN NEIGHBORHOOD OF CHICAGO.

The Mystery Solver's Catalog, Inc.

WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF THE SIGHTINGS, ONE PILSEN MAN HAD WON THE STATE'S LOTTO JACKPOT, WHILE AN AREA WOMAN SAW HER BREAST CANCER GO INTO REMISSION.

12:27 AM

SO THE QUESTION IS: DID SANTA MUERTE APPEAR AND GIVE THESE PEOPLE LUCK, OR IS IT JUST A HAPPY COINCIDENCE? PERHAPS THE SIGHTINGS SIMPLY FOLLOW THE LUCKY--

click

TESTING. TESTING. BMJ PERSONAL TAPE RECORDER FUNCTIONING WELL.

DETECTIVE'S LOG. CASE 1013.

THE CASE OF THE DOZING DETECTIVE.

WHO PUT CAT CURIO IN A COMA FOR THIRTEEN YEARS?

OH GOD...

THIRTEEN YEARS.

MONICA CHEN?

OH JESUS!

KIND OF JUMPY, AREN'T YOU?

SORRY. I THOUGHT FOR A SECOND *HE* WAS THE MEATMAN.

HURR. I *AM* THE MEATMAN.

LONG STORY. CHRIS SAYS YOU SAW A SCARRED-UP GUY RUN INTO THIS BUILDING.

YEAH. SEE, I WAS GONNA SHOOT SOME PHOTOS OF THIS BUILDING FOR SCHOOL. AND, UHM, I SAW THIS CREEPY GUY RUN AROUND TO THE BACK.

SOME OTHER PEOPLE HAD SPOTTED THE GUY. "THE MEATMAN," THEY SAID. SO I TOOK SOME SHOTS.

IF YOU ZOOM IN, YOU CAN SEE HIM BETTER.

THAT'S JULIE. ALL RIGHT. WE'RE GOING IN.

HE'S A CRAZED KILLER! YOU'RE GOING IN THERE WITHOUT ANY PROTECTION?

OH, WE BROUGHT ALL *KINDS* OF PROTECTION.

THIS IS A TRAP.

WHAT TIPPED YOU OFF? THE FACT THAT MS. KITTY COULDN'T LOOK US IN THE EYES, THE "BIGFOOT HOAX" PHOTOGRAPH...

OR THESE OH-SO-OBVIOUS FOOTPRINTS LEADING INTO THE BASEMENT?

HURRRR. WE SHOULD LEAVE.

NO. SOMETHING WEIRD IS GOING ON HERE, AND I'VE FOUND THE BEST WAY TO GET THE INFORMATION YOU NEED IS JUST TO DIVE IN, ARMED FOR BEAR.

THIS PLAN HAS GOTTEN US ALMOST KILLED SEVERAL TIMES, YES?

YEAH, AND AS LONG AS IT ONLY GETS US "ALMOST KILLED" IT'S A GOOD PLAN.

LIBBY! THEY'RE IN!

I SEE THEM GOOD JOB, MONNY. THAI DINNER ON ME AFTER THIS IS ALL OVER.

OH JEEZ, LIBBY. BE CAREFUL.

DON'T WORRY. I'M AMAZING, REMEMBER?

STORAGE

STORAGE

CREEK...

nam ciasom nekawa.

meht llik.

KILL 'EM DEAD FOR WHAT THEY DID TO MY SISTER.

SHH. I HEAR...

WHISPERS.

CLANG

HNGH. WHAT'S THE MATTER, JULES? DIDN'T LIKE HOW BAD WE PUNKED YOUR ASS LAST TIME?

HRRRRGGHGHMM!!

GHAH! IT IS DEFINITELY JULIAN!

HE IS MINE!

YOU WILL NOT RUIN MY NAME AGAIN!

SLAM

I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING. LIKE A GIRL WHISPERING. AND THE WORDS SOUNDED FAMILIAR...

I WAS HIDING ONCE, JUST LIKE YOU. BUT I WAS IN A HOTEL BATHROOM, WITH THIS KILLER BY THE NAME OF FATHER WRATH.

HE WAS UNDER SOMEONE'S CONTROL, SEE? AND HE ONLY MOVED WHEN THIS GIRL SPOKE.

BUT SHE DIDN'T SPEAK REGULAR OLD WORDS. NO, SHE WAS USING SPELLS. *MAGIC.*

AND. SO. ARE. *YOU!*

NOW, DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT...

BEFORE I FILL YOUR PRETTY LITTLE HEAD WITH BUCKSHOT?

LIBBY!

KWUNK

MY N-NAME IS L-LIBERTY. LIBERTY LOCHS. YOU...YOU--

KILLED YOUR SISTER, LAURA.*

YOU LEAVE HER ALONE!!

OH, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE--

*SEE H/S GIRLS GONE DEAD AND H/S VS. CHUCKY, IN OMNIBUS VOL. 1.

I...I HAVE A MAGIC FIGURINE!

SO YOU LET LIBBY GO!

URRGHN...

HRRRNNNGH!!!

HURR?

RRRRRRAA!

NUNH!

PWAK

AW, FUCK M--

KARROM

HAHAHAHAH!!

OH GOD...

HAHAHAHAH!!

UK--

SNAK!

TO BE CONTINUED...

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

ANDREZEJ GRILL. CLOSED FOR FIRE DAMAGE.

VLAD, CAN... CAN YOU TURN AROUND?

HUUURRR. YES. I'M SORRY, LIBBY.

NO, IT'S JUST...I HAVE TO DO THIS FOR THE MAGIC TO WORK.

YOU CAN END THE SPELL BY LIFTING ME OUT OF HERE, OKAY?

SO...SO...COLD...

I--I AM SO SORRY...THIS-- IT'S JUST SO HORRIBLE...

YES.

HORRIBLE.

OKAY. S-S-S-SHE... SHE'LL BE HERE PRETTY QUICK, SO G-G-GET READY WITH YOUR QUESTIONS.

eeht snommus retsis ruoy! shcol arual. shcol arual.

doolb ym... doolb ym si doolb ruoy. arual, niaga uoy ot klat annaw i.

...doolb ruoy si.

HURRR?

NUNH HUHN HUHN NUH HUHNN!!

HUNH!

I AM HERE. WHO CALLS ME?!

MMM. I'D KNOW THAT BODY ANYWHERE! WHY, I LIVED IN IT ONCE!

VLAD!!

URRNH!

DON'T FIGHT ME, VLAD. I HAVE ALL THE STRENGTH OF DEATH, A DEATH YOU SENT ME TO.

YOU LET MY OWN ZOMBIES KILL ME!*

*SEE H/S VS. CHUCKY, IN OMNIBUS VOL. 1.

YOU AND CASSIE LET THEM...

EAT ME!!

TAXI

FRICKING YUPPIES NEVER TIP!

AAAHH!!

THUNK

YOU STUPID JUNKIE! YOU SCRATCH MY CAR!

HUNH. FUCK. FAST... BASTARD...

HUNH...I NEED A RIDE.

CAB OUT OF ORDER. SOME JUNKIE DENT MY CAR!

CHASE THAT JUNKIE DOWN FOR ME, AND I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE BUCKS AND A PROMISE TO BEAT HIS ASS.

YOU MAKE GOOD DEAL, LADY.

GLURRBLE...

OH, YESSSS. I WISH CASSIE WERE HERE WITH YOU...

I'M GOING TO BURN HER ALIVE.

NURRGH!

NO!!!

LAURA LOCHS! YOUR SISTER BROUGHT YOU BACK FROM DEAD TO ANSWER QUESTIONS! MY QUESTIONS! YOU WILL DO WHAT YOU WERE SUMMONED FOR, YES?

NYAHNNNG. Y-YES.

HOW DID YOU COME TO USE YOUR SISTER THIS WAY?

OH, LIBBY. I ALWAYS WISHED I HAD YOUR BODY.

NYHHN. I FOUND LIBERTY. I FOUND HER WHEN SHE CONTEMPLATED MORTALITY. WHEN SHE CONSIDERED TAKING HER OWN LIFE. WHEN SHE CAME CLOSE TO DEATH...

AND *DEATH* IS WHERE I AM.

LACEY. LAURA. LIBERTY. LOUIS.

"LIBERTY WAS ALWAYS THE FAMILY'S BLACK SHEEP. ALWAYS IN TROUBLE. ALWAYS DISAPPOINTING OUR WONDERFUL MOTHER AND FATHER.

"ALWAYS EMBARRASSING THEM IN FRONT OF OUR RELATIVES, OUR NEIGHBORS, AND OUR CHURCH.

"MOMMY ALWAYS PUT UP WITH HER BECAUSE SHE WAS DADDY'S FAVORITE. THEN, ONE DAY, SHE CROSSED THE LINE, AND THAT WAS THAT.

"LIBERTY LEFT. SHE WOULDN'T BE FORNICATING AND ABUSING DRUGS IN THE LOCHS' HOUSE AGAIN. SHE MOVED TO CHICAGO, WHERE THEY TOLERATE THAT KIND OF THING. AND NO ONE IN THE LOCHS' HOUSE HEARD FROM HER.

"WITHOUT GOOD GUIDANCE FROM OUR PARENTS OR GOD, LIBBY GOT HERSELF INTO ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE. SHE HAD A CRAPPY JOB, FEW FRIENDS, AND TO TOP IT OFF, SHE WENT AND GOT HERSELF PREGNANT OUT OF WEDLOCK. SHAMEFUL WHORE THAT SHE WAS, SHE DECIDED TO GET AN ABORTION...

"SHE WAS SO DISTRACTED BY HER OWN PATHETIC LIFE THAT SHE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I'D GOTTEN EATEN BY ZOMBIES, THANKS TO YOU.

"I WATCHED FROM MY PLACE IN THE REALM OF DEATH. I WATCHED MY SISTER FIGHT FOR HER LIFE AFTER THE ANESTHESIA GAVE HER A HEART ATTACK ON THE OPERATING TABLE. AND I PITIED HER.

"I SPENT A FEW YEARS STUDYING NECROMANTIC SPELL BOOKS--THE ONES I USED TO CONTROL FATHER WRATH AND MY OTHER SERVANTS. I KNOW HOW TO MANIPULATE DEATH. SO I STOPPED LIBERTY'S SOUL FROM LEAVING HER BODY. I SAVED HER MISERABLE LIFE, AND SHE KNEW JUST WHO'D DONE IT.

LAURA?

"I GAVE HER SPELLS TO ALLOW ME TO SPEAK THROUGH HER, AND THE EYE TO FIND OTHER NECROMANCY TOMES. LIBERTY MAY BE THE BLACK SHEEP, BUT SHE'S A GOOD SISTER.

"SHE KNEW SHE OWED ME HER LIFE, SO SHE WAS GOING TO HELP ME COME BACK.

"BUT THERE WAS NO POINT TO ME COMING BACK IF I WAS JUST GOING TO GET KILLED BY YOU AND CASSIE AGAIN. SO LIBERTY AND I FOUND THE KILLER WHO'D FIRST BROUGHT YOU TOGETHER. WITH THAT KIND OF BAIT, HOW COULD YOU RESIST WALKING RIGHT INTO OUR HANDS?"

THEN WHAT OF THESE-- THIS SKULL WOMAN?

THE DEAD GIRL BELIEVED IT TO BE MAGIC. BUT IT ONLY CAUSED JULIAN TO BREAK HER.

RRRAH. LIBERTY. STUPID WHORE. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

STUPID, STUPID, STUPID WHORE! I SHOULD HAVE LET YOU DIE!!

ANSWER! WHAT DOES THE STATUE DO?

STUPID LIBBY. SHE RUINS EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHES.

SHE WANTED TO DO "GOOD" WITH A NECROMANCY BOOK. SHE TRIED TO MAKE ***LUCKY*** ITEMS FOR THE DREGS, THE DOWN AND OUT, LUCKLESS LOSERS LIKE HER.

BUT, NECROMANCY ISN'T MEANT TO BLESS ITEMS. TO DO SO DRAGS A SPIRIT OUT OF THE AFTERLIFE AND BONDS IT TO THE OBJECT. A SLAVE SPIRIT THAT DOESN'T WANT TO BE THERE.

AND WHEN WE RAISED JULIAN, WE BONDED ***HIM*** TO THE POWERS OF DEATH AND BLACK MAGIC SO THAT HE WOULD BE AT OUR BECK AND CALL.

JULIAN SERVES DEATH. HE'LL FREE ANY SPIRITS IMPRISONED ON THIS PLANE.

BUT THE ONLY WAY TO DO THIS--

YES. ***KILL EVERYONE WHO POSSESSES ONE OF THE BLESSED STATUES!***

SHUT UP.

KILL THIS BODY, VLAD. I KNOW THE POWER AND RAGE INSIDE YOU. I'VE FELT IT! I'VE USED IT AS IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE USED! SNAP THIS STUPID SLUT'S NECK!

KILL MY SISTER FOR BETRAYING M--!

DOWN HERE! THE FUCKER CUT THROUGH HERE!

I HEAR YOU, LADY! DON'T YELL!

BEEP BEEP BEEP

VLAD! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHERE THE HELL IS JULIE HEADING?

SO SORRY, MONNY. I SCREWED THIS UP SO BAD...

HE IS ON HIS WAY TO A NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED PILSEN TO KILL SOME MEXICAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE TOO MUCH LUCK.

OH, RIGHT. OF COURSE.

YIANNI! ARE WE HEADING TOWARD SOMEPLACE CALLED PILSEN?

YES, LADY. THE RUNNING JUNKIE IS LEADING US THERE.

WELL, THERE YOU GO. SO, VLAD, I'M TAKING ON THE MOSAIC MAN ALL BY MYSELF?

LIBERTY WILL GIVE YOU THE ADDRESS. SHE IS COMING WITH ME.

YOU'RE BRINGING HER? SHE GOT US INTO THIS. SHE'S FUCKING INSANE!

NO. SHE IS LIKE SAMHAIN, WHOM YOU FORGAVE AND LET LIVE...

SHE HAS BEEN USED.

NO. WE FOUGHT HIM TOGETHER THE FIRST TIME. WE HAVE FOUGHT TOGETHER EVER SINCE. I WILL TAKE THE VAN AND FIND YOU.

WHERE?

THE MAN...THE MAN WHO WON THE LOTTERY. JULIAN WILL GO THERE FIRST. I KNOW THE ADDRESS.

PILSEN NEIGHBORHOOD.

THE HOME OF MANUEL NAVARRO-MONTES.

<MANUEL, I THINK YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR TOAST BEFORE YOU ARE TOO DRUNK TO SAY IT.>*

<AH, MYRA, I MAY BE THE LUCKY ONE, BUT YOU'RE THE WISE ONE.>

*TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH.

<MY FRIENDS! AS YOU ALL KNOW, LIFE IN AMERICA IS NOT SO EASY AS WE ONCE DREAMED IT WOULD BE. INTO EVERY LIFE, SOME DIFFICULTY, AND SOME DAMNED CHICAGO COLD, WILL COME. AND I THANK YOU FOR BEING MY FRIENDS THROUGH ALL OF IT.>

<AND WHILE SANTA MUERTE HAS CHOSEN TO LISTEN TO MY PRAYERS AND BESTOW HER GRACE ON ME, I HOPE THAT WE CAN REMAIN FRIENDS...>

<BUT, I'M TELLING YOU ALL NOW: I'M STILL NOT LENDING YOU ANY MONEY.>

HERE WE ARE, LADY! DON'T MESS HIM UP TOO BAD.

SKRRREEE

OH, DON'T WORRY. I'LL LEAVE A FEW BIG CHUNKS.

LIBERTY, YOU ARE OKAY?

NO, I AM DEFINITELY *NOT* OKAY. I GOT MY BEST FRIEND KILLED. I FUCKED UP EVERYTHING.

THEN WE WILL MAKE IT RIGHT. YOU WILL CAST A SPELL AND STOP JULIAN.

HE'S NOT WORKING FOR ME ANYMORE. YOU HEARD WHAT LAURA SAID.

THEN I HAVE ANOTHER PLAN.

WHY ARE YOU BEING SO NICE TO ME? I TRIED TO GET YOU KILLED.

YOU ARE GOOD IN YOUR HEART. YOU DID WHAT YOU BELIEVED WAS RIGHT AND DID NOT KNOW YOU WERE BEING USED. I HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE TO UNDERSTAND THIS.

NO. LAURA'S RIGHT. I'M A WASTE. I'M NEVER GOING TO MAKE THIS SHIT RIGHT.

YOU WILL. TELL ME HOW THE STATUES WILL WORK.

WELL, LAURA SAID JULIAN WAS AFTER ANYONE I'D GIVEN THE STATUES TO.

SO NOW I HAVE ALL THE STATUES YOU DID NOT GIVE OUT. JULIAN SHOULD COME FOR ME, YES?

RIGHT.

HURR. DOES THIS LUCK MAGIC WORK?

WELL, WE'VE HIT EVERY GREEN LIGHT FOR THREE MILES AND HAVEN'T SEEN A SINGLE COP, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE DRIVING SIXTY-FIVE IN A THIRTY-FIVE ZONE.

SO I'D SAY, YEAH, IT WORKS.

‹MANUEL, DO YOU NEED TO BRING THE SAINT TO THE BATHROOM WITH YOU?›
‹I'M SO DRUNK, I NEED LUCK NOT TO PISS ON MY SHOES.›
‹OH...YES. I AM GIVING BACK THE BEER I RENTED, YES?›
♪♫♪--
MAAAANNNNUUUUELLL.
‹WHAT?›
MANNNUEEELLLLL.
KRRRSH

IT LONGS TO BE FREE.

‹OH MY GOD!›

GRAH!

RAAAAHH!

THOK

FZRRK

‹SANTA MUERTE...›

FREEEEE.

‹NO!›

UNGH!

WHOOMP

IT SCREAMS TO BE FREE. YOU MUST DIE, MANUEL.

<OH NO. NO NO NO...>

MANUEL!

<LEAVE MY HUSBAND ALONE!>

RUH?

YES, MANUEL. YOU HAVE ENSLAVED THE DEAD, AND YOUR LUCK HAS RUN OUT.

<LEAVE HIM ALONE!!!>

THWOK

I DO THIS IN THE NAME OF YIANNI'S CAB, MOTHERFUCKER.

NYHAHHH!

YOU HAVE TO *GIVE* ME THE STATUE.

WHA--?

LIKE A GIFT! *GIVE* IT TO *ME!*

Y-YES. HERE!

GOOD! NOW GET YOUR FRIENDS AND GET THE FUCK OUTTA HERE!

HEY, JULIE! WHO'S THE LUCKY BITCH NOW?

OH FUCK! YOU GOT MUCH FAST--

HACK!

ERFF!

THE SPIRITS SCREAM FOR YOUR DEATH!

WOOFT!

AWUMP

I SCREAM FOR YOUR DEATH!

ANGH!

SHUNK

AH!

DEATH HAS GIVEN ME CLARITY, HACK. I WAS A SLAVE TO THE GIRL. I WAS A MINDLESS HUSK, RESPONDING TO HER WHIMS.

WOK

FUCK! LUCKY MY ASS!

BUT HER ATTEMPT TO BLESS THESE PEOPLE HAS GIVEN ME PURPOSE.

NOW I AM *DEATH* ITSELF!

I AM THE *LIBERATOR OF SOULS!!*

VROOOM

HRAH?

AGK!

KROOM

WE GOT HIM! HELL, YES!

YES. BUT HE IS NO LONGER JUST A SLASHER...

AND HE WILL NOT FALL SO EASILY.

HRRRAGHN!

THEN WE GO WITH MY FIRST PLAN.

JULIAN! WE HAVE THE STATUES!

SO MANY SOULS. THEY SCREAM TO BE FREE!

FREEEE.

FREE.

LIBERTAD.

FREEE.

OH.

LIBERTY, YOU MUST GO FAST NOW.

SQUUUEEAL

WHERE WILL WE LEAD HIM?

YOU'VE GOT ALL THE LUCK WE COULD EVER POSSIBLY USE, REMEMBER?

THERE'S A NICE, ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL YARD RIGHT WHERE WE NEED ONE.

CHROOM

VLAD!

HURR. YES. LUCK.

YOU DESERVE THE TOUCH OF DEATH EVEN MORE THAN HACK, MEATMAN!

SHRIK

THUK

DEATH IS DUMB.

HURR. FORTUNATELY FOR US ALL...

LIBERTY! FLIP THE SWITCH! AND GET OUT--*NOW!*

OKAY! BUT YOU GOTTA GET OUT, TOO.

VUMP

WHU--P!

WHOOF!

HURR. LIBBY..

GLITCH
HUNGH!

ereh morf yawa em reviled.
NO SPELL WILL SAVE YOU NOW. I WORK FOR DEATH, AND YOUR INDISCRETIONS HAVE EARNED MY TOUCH.

THE SPELL ISN'T FOR YOU, ASSHOLE...

BUT THIS IS.

KA-BOOM

LIBBY.

MORNING.

C'MON, BIG GUY. PRETTY SOON PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE ASKING QUESTIONS...

AND WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO EXPLAIN ALL THOSE POWER TOOLS AND TROPHIES--OR THE TWO CORPSES.

YES.

YOU THINK ALL THOSE SOULS ARE FREE NOW?

YES.

I BELIEVE ALL THE TORMENTED SOULS ARE FREE NOW. INCLUDING JULIAN.

AND LIBBY.

NICE LITTLE BIT OF LUCK THAT MANUEL HAD THIS SWEET HEARSE TO GET RID OF, EH?

HURR. YES... LUCK.

WHEN PEOPLE THINK OF MIRACLES, THE FIRST PLACE THAT COMES TO MIND IS PROBABLY VATICAN CITY.

MAYBE ISRAEL.

SOME HOLY CITY THAT BIRTHED A GREAT RELIGION.

THEY PROBABLY DON'T THINK OF CHICAGO.

BUT MIRACLES DO HAPPEN IN CHICAGO.

THE END.

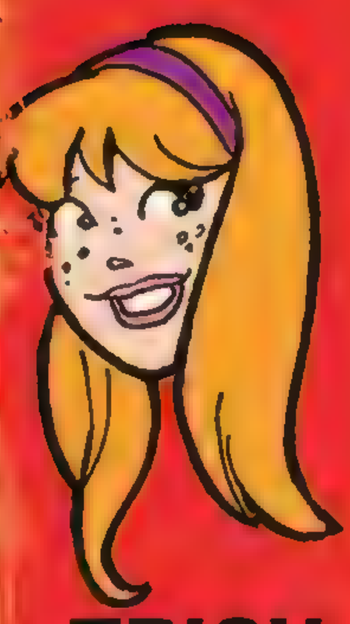
DEVIL'S DUE

FEATURING

VLAD

POOCH

LUNK



TRISH

LINCOLN?

Hack/slash

ISSUE 28

350 cents

SOMETHING'S FISHY

HACK/SLASH #28B by DAN PARENT

...tions ...r distrib- ...s cover or ...r in a multi- ...affixed to, nor ...dvertising, literary ...atter whatsoever. ...S A.

OUR BOY Taber in Something's Fishy

HAVERHILL

GOLLY! THIS MIGHT JUST BE THE LUCKIEST NIGHT OF MY WHOLE LIFE!

TRISH AND ANGELA, THE TWO GIRLS WHO COMPETE FOR MY AFFECTION, SEEM TO HAVE BURIED THE HATCHET!

AND THEY MUST REALLY BE FEELING WARM AND FUZZY ABOUT IT, BECAUSE THEY'RE ABOUT TO TAKE A MIDNIGHT SWIM TOGETHER IN MARCH...

[illegible]

HO-LEE... WHO KNEW THE BEACH COULD BE SO HOT IN THE WINTER?

WHADDA YOU DOIN' IN THE BUSHES, TABER?

OH. HI, GORILLA! I WAS...UH...JUST PRACTICING FOR MY LIFEGUARD JOB.

BUT IT AIN'T EVEN SUMMER FOR THREE MONTHS!

I NEED A LOT OF PRACTICE.

HEY, GIRLS, LOOK WHAT I FOUND LURKING IN DA BUSHES.

IT'S OKAY, DONALD.

YEAH, IT'S ABOUT TIME WE LET TABER INTO THE FOLD.

FOLD? WHAT FOLD?

CAN YOU HEAR THEM, CHRISTOPHER?

HEAR WHO?

THEY SING THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SONGS. THEIR VOICES ARE LIKE ANGELS' VOICES, BUT YOU MUST KNOW WHAT TO LISTEN FOR.

IAAAA-- R'LYEH.

CTHULHU FHTAGN.

IAAAA, IAAAA.

HUH. CAN'T SAY I KNOW THAT ONE.

BUT I DO DIG THAT NEW SONG BY THOSE JONAS BOYS. THEY SURE CAN SING, THE LITTLE FELLERS...

HAVE YOU NOTICED, CHRISTOPHER?

HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT HAVERHILL HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE LINCOLN WAS KILLED?*

THERE'S DARKNESS HERE NOW, WHEN THERE NEVER WAS BEFORE.

SHE WANTS TO CHANGE THAT.

*SEE H/S ISSUE #6, IN OMNIBUS VOL. 2.

WHO-- OH!

MARY. MARY WANTS TO MAKE IT PERFECT. SHE WANTS TO CHANGE IT ALL BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS.

AND THEN SHE WANTS *US* TO CHANGE, TOO.

EYYAAAAAAAA!!

ELSEWHERE.

GOOD EVENING. THIS IS LATE KNIGHT A.M., AND I'M YOUR HOST: ALAN KNIGHT.

HAVERHILL 34

WE'RE GOING TO THE PHONES TO DISCUSS ALL YOUR TALES OF THE UNUSUAL AND THE PARANORMAL.

YOU KNOW, WHAT THIS CAR LACKS IN SIZE AND SPACE, IT MAKES UP FOR WITH MYSTIQUE.

HURR. I MISS THE VAN.

AW, C'MON. WE CAN GET SOME PLASTIC SKULLS TO HANG FROM THE MIRROR.

HELLO, CALLER. YOU'RE ON LATE KNIGHT...

NO SKULLS.

SHRUNKEN HEADS?

GARFIELD.

UM...HI, ALAN. LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE TO CALL. FISH-PEOPLE HAVE OVERRUN MY WHOLE TOWN, AND MY OLD GIRLFRIEND HAS, UH, **GILLS** FOR BOOBS, AND--

CALLER, IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?

GARFIELD? VLAD, WE CAN'T WASTE THE NATURAL BAD-ASSERY OF A *HEARSE* WITH THAT UNFUNNY FAT FUCKING CAT--

SHH... CASSANDRA! ON THE LATE KNIGHT...

NO, THIS ISN'T A JOKE. THE TIME I ORDERED TWENTY-FIVE ANCHOVY PIZZAS FOR PRINCIPAL CRUNK-- *THAT* WAS JOKE.

IT IS OUR BOY TABER.

HAVERHILL.

TABER.

JOIN US, CHRISTOPHER.

BE ONE OF US. WE'RE FAMILY.

WE HAVE A BABY, CHRIS.

WE FOUND MRS. KETTLE'S NEW SON.

OH GOSH.

OPEN THE DOOR, TABER, OR WE'LL EAT LITTLE JOEY KETTLE.

WAAAAAHH

DON'T BELIEVE US? LISTEN. HE'S CRYING BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO LET HIM GET EATEN.

OKAY! DON'T!! I'M OPENING THE DOOR! I'M--

OH... FIDDLESTICKS.

WE KNEW YOU'D COME AROUND.

TEE-HEE!

YOU'RE MAKING YOUR MOTHER VERY PROUD, SON.

VIEW

I--I CHANGED MY MIND!

THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW, SON.

YEAH, WE, LIKE, NEED YOU.

PRINCIPAL CRUNK! I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT THE ANCHOVIES!

THE MISTRESS WILL BE MOST PLEASED WITH ME.

BA KOOM!!

CASSIE! JEEPERS, HOW'D YOU FIND ME?

NO OFFENSE, TABER, BUT YOU'RE PRETTY PREDICTABLE.

OUTSIDERS!

HOW DARE THEY INTRUDE!

KILL THEM!

YOU'RE *CHUM*, BITCH.

CASSIE, DON'T!

BOOM!

WHAT THE FUCK, MAN? WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE YOUR ASS FROM MONSTERS.

BUT THESE AREN'T MONSTERS!

"THEY'RE THE PEOPLE OF [illegible]"

HEE HEE. WOW, IT'S THE SEXY TREE FROM PROM! HEY, YOU BIG LOG OF A MAN!

PINKY?

AND YOU ALMOST SHOT MY MOM!

FUCK. VLAD! STRATEGIC RETREAT?

HURRRM. YES. JUST A SECOND...

WHEEE!!

THERE. AND NOW...

LET US HAUL MUCH ASS.

WHICH WAY? EVERYTHING IN THIS TOWN LOOKS THE FUCKING SAME TO ME!

GENERAL STORE

PORK STORE

ANYWHERE, AS LONG AS IT'S NOT THE LAKE! SOME *CREEPY* STUFF GOES ON--

WAIT! I KNOW JUST THE PLACE!

THIS IS THE HONOR HOUSE NOVELTY SHOP.

WHEN WE WERE KIDS, LUNK AND I USED TO ALWAYS SAY WE'D COME HERE TO HIDE IF THE RUSSIANS EVER ATT--

EYEBALL

LUNK!

YO, CHRIS. HOW YA DOIN'? NOW, GET THE FUCK OUT.

WOAH!

BUT WE NEED TO HIDE! THE TOWN'S GONE CRAZY!

IT'S GONE GEORGE ROMERO MEETS CHARLIE THE TUNA, IS WHAT IT'S GONE.

AND I DON'T TRUST ANYBODY, INCLUDING YOU. SO GET THE FUCK OUT.

MASKS

KNIVES

BUT I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS!

WE ARE. AS SOON AS SHIT GOES BACK TO NORMAL, I'LL RETAKE MY PLACE AS YOUR BIG, SILENT SIDEKICK. I'LL EAT HOT DOGS LIKE THEY'RE GONNA STOP MAKING 'EM, AND PRETEND ALL THE DUMB SHIT YOU SPEW ARE GOOD IDEAS. I PROMISE.

BUT UNTIL I KNOW YOU AIN'T GONNA SPROUT GILLS AND SING SOME GODDAMN SWEDISH FOLK TUNE AT ME, YOU AND THESE OTHER ASSHOLES ARE GONNA HAVE TO GO.

IAA IAA IAA...CTHULHU FHTAGN.

GUYS...

SONOVA-BEEYOTCH.

YOU BROUGHT THEM TO ME? IT AIN'T ENOUGH YOU MADE ME DRESS UP AS YOUR COUSIN "OLGA" TO SNEAK INTO TRISH'S PAJAMA PARTY? OR THAT YOU TOLD EVERYONE I WAS RETARDED SO YOU COULD JOIN ANGELA'S PEER HELPER GROUP?

YOU HAD TO GO BRING THE SHRIMP-TITS TO MY FUCKING DOOR--?

EYES

CRASH!

HEY, NERDS...

3D GL

I CAN SEE YOUR SOULS!

LUNK! DON'T!

FUCK THAT! I HATED THAT ASSHOLE WHEN HE WASN'T SPONGEBOB!

NOOOOOO!!!

BAKOW!

YOU KILLED DONALD! WHO'S GONNA CARRY MY BOOKS FOR ME NOW?

AHHH!!

GO! MORE OF THEM COME!

OH MY GOSH OH MY GOSH OH MY GOSH.

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, TABER, BUT WE MAY HAVE TO KILL A FEW OF YOUR FRIENDS BEFORE WE GET OUT OF HERE.

OADING ZONE

PINKY ATE LUNK'S *EYEBALL!*

SHE WAS NOT... HERSELF, YES?

FUCK. THIS WHOLE TOWN SMELLS LIKE A FISH MARKET IN SUMMER.

WHO DID THIS TO HAVERHILL, VLAD?! WHO *COULD* DO IT?!

HURRRM. MAYBE GOD?

IT'S JUST LIKE REVEREND SPIRE SAID--*THE END TIMES.*

CASSANDRA?

CASSANDRA!!

NO ONE TAKES ME TO BED, BATH AND BEYOND WITHOUT MY CONSENT!

SHUFF!

ALL RIGHT, FUCKER! IF YOU THINK YOU'RE TOUCHING ME AGAIN--

OH. FUCK.

LINCOLN TODD?

YOU... CHOSE... LUNK... OVER... ME.*

*SEE H/S ISSUE #6, IN OMNIBUS VOL. 2.

NOW... YOU... TAKE... ME.

YOU PUT THAT THING ANYWHERE NEAR ME AND YOU'LL GET IT BACK IN WORSE SHAPE THAN THE REST OF YOU.

SWAK!

HRRNG.

ANOTHER GROOM WHO CAN'T KEEP IT IN HIS PANTS.

:HUNF!:

GIVE A MAN BACK HIS LIFE, AND HE'LL SPEND IT TRYING TO HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH OLD FLAMES. ANOTHER EXPERIMENT IN LOVE...FAILED.

JUST AS WELL, I SUPPOSE. THERE IS SO VERY LITTLE SHAKESPEARE IN MY HEART.

YOU HAVEN'T UNDERTAKEN THE CHANGE YET, MY DEAR--

LET ME GO, YOU CALAMARI CUNT!

CASSANDRA HACK?

IT IS YOU. I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED, I SUPPOSE. WITH THE NUMEROUS "***HORROR HUNTERS***" SCAMPERING ABOUT, IT'S INEVITABLE I'D RUN INTO ONE OF YOU EVENTUALLY.

I SHOULD JUST BE GLAD IT'S YOU, THE GIRL WITH MOMMY ISSUES AND NO SPECIAL SKILLS, INSTEAD OF THAT RED DEVIL BOY.

WHO *ARE* YOU?

IS IT TIME FOR THE "VILLAINOUS MONOLOGUE" ALREADY? MY, THAT ONE REALLY SNUCK UP ON ME. THESE STORIES SEEM TO GO BY FASTER EVERY TIME.

I AM MARY SHELLEY LOVECRAFT.

I AM A SENTIENT HYPER-CONCEPT OF THE NTH LEVEL, GIVEN CONSCIOUSNESS AND DESIRE BY THE PURE RELEVANCE AND POWER OF MY SOURCE MATERIALS. I DESIRE TO OBLITERATE PHYSICAL SPACE AND REPLACE IT WITH THE SUPERIOR REALM OF IDEA SPACE.

WHAT THE FUCK...?

:SIGH: THOUGH YOUR TALE IS MORE COMPLEX THAN SOME, YOU STILL EXIST IN THE SIMPLE WORLD OF REVENGE, TITILLATION, AND DEATH.

LET ME TRY AGAIN, IN TERMINOLOGY MORE BEFITTING YOUR AUTHOR.

I'M MARY. I'M FRANKENSTEIN, CTHULHU, AND GODZILLA ALL ROLLED INTO ONE.

I'M GONNA FUCK UP YOUR WORLD, BITCH, AND FICTIONAL CHARACTERS ARE GONNA HOP OUT OF BOOKS AND TAKE OVER.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH!

INSOLENT FOOL. IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE DRAW OF YOUR OWN TALE, I WOULD KILL YOU FOR YOUR DISRESPECT.

HAHA...HUNH. AHEM. RIGHT ON WITH YOUR BAD SELF, SQUIDWARD.

DID YOU NOT WONDER WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HAVERHILL?

IT'S KIND OF OBVIOUS: SOMEONE TURNED A NICE LITTLE TOWN INTO SOMETHING NOT EVEN AQUAMAN COULD LOVE.

I HAPPENED TO HAVERHILL.

I WAS WEAK FOLLOWING MY LAST DEFEAT, TRAPPED IN A LESSER FICTION.*

I NEEDED POWER TO RESUSCITATE MYSELF, SO I LOOKED FOR THE MOST PERFECT STORY I COULD FIND.

*SEE H/S ENTRY WOUND, IN TPB VOL. 6.

HAVERHILL IS THAT PERFECT STORY. INNOCENCE. DISCOVERY. THE VITALITY OF YOUTH AND YOUNG LOVE.

I STOLE HAVERHILL'S TALE. BUT NOTHING EXISTS WITHOUT A STORY, SO I REPLACED HAVERHILL'S STORY WITH ONE OF MY OWN.

NOW THERE IS A SHADOW OVER HAVERHILL WHERE ONCE THERE WAS LIGHT.

OH GOD. YOU'RE SERIOUS...

I AM. AND I HAVE DONE THESE THINGS WITH NO SMALL REGRET.

TO REPLACE SUCH LIFE AND GAIETY WITH TERROR AND DEATH BURDENS ME. BUT IT IS FOR A GREATER GOOD...

AFTER ALL, WHEN I OVERTAKE THIS REALITY, TRUE DEATH WILL BE A DISTANT MEMORY.

RRAAHHHH!!!

YOU REMAIN TRUE TO YOUR CHARACTERIZATION, CASSANDRA.

!

YOU ARE INTERESTING.

PERHAPS NOT AS WIDELY LOVED AS THE SUMMERS GIRL...

BUT STILL COMPELLING.

MY EXISTENCE HAS BEEN A LONELY ONE.

I HAVE TRIED, MANY TIMES, TO CREATE A GROOM FOR MYSELF. I HAVE FAILED EACH TIME, WITH RESULTS ALWAYS SIMILAR TO THE MESS OVER THERE.

THAT SPEAKS TO MY WEAKNESS, I SUPPOSE. I AM COMPOSED MOSTLY OF FEAR AND ANGER, AND I HAVE RELIED UPON ONE PARTICULARLY HORRIFYING TALE TOO OFTEN AS INSPIRATION FOR MY MATE.

BUT YOU...YOU ARE TERROR AND SEX. YOU ARE FEAR AND LOVE.

BE MY LOVER, CASSANDRA HACK. I AM WITHOUT RESTRICTION OF GENDER.

I CAN BE ANYONE YOU WANT.

I CAN BE AN OLD LOVE.

I CAN BE A NEW AND FORBIDDEN ATTRACTION.

HELP ME, AND YOU CAN HAVE THE PERFECT STORY. SIMPLE AND PAINLESS. EXCITING AND UNPREDICTABLE.

AND YOU WILL REMAIN AGELESS, IMMORTAL, LIKE ALL THE GREATEST FICTION. GREAT STORIES NEVER DIE, CASSANDRA.

Y-YOU MONSTER, LEAVE HER ALONE!

LET HER GO, OR I'LL--I'LL BLOW MY HEAD OFF!

AND WHAT, DEAR BOY, WOULD THAT ACCOMPLISH?

DON'T PLAY STUPID WITH ME, LADY! I HEARD YOUR WHOLE SPIEL! YOU ***NEED*** HAVERHILL. YOU NEED IT TO FEED ON.

AND IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN, IT'S THAT THIS TOWN NEEDS ***ME.*** I'M THE STAR OF THIS STORY. SURE, THERE ARE LOTS OF BIT PLAYERS, BUT THIS LITTLE WACKY SLICE OF LIFE DEPENDS ON ***OUR BOY...***

CHRISTOPHER MOTHERFUCKING TABER.

YOU'D END YOUR OWN LIFE TO STOP ME?

YOU'RE DARN RIGHT I WOULD. WITHOUT THIS TOWN, I'VE GOT NOTHING ANYWAY. I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD.

ALL RIGHT. I'M GOING TO SET HER DOWN...

NOW, DEAR BOY, PUT DOWN THE GUN.

OH JEEZ!

CHRISTOPHER. SO LOVEABLY INEPT. SO ENDEARINGLY NAIVE...

SO PREDICTABLE.

HURRM. YUCK.

SLICKTCH!

AIEEEGGHH!!

OH NO!

HNF! I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO KILL TABER. BUT, YOU, VLAD ARE A SIDEKICK! COMEDIC RELIEF!

KRAK!

AND YOU'RE NOT EVEN A FOOTNOTE.

YOU...ARE... EXPENDABLE.

NUNH...

WE'LL... HUNHH...ALL BE TOGETHER SOON ENOUGH.

I WIN IN THE END.

EVENTUALLY YOU ALL DIE.

AND ALL THAT IS LEFT...

IS STORIES.

IS SHE REALLY DEAD?

I DON'T THINK SO.

BUT WE DEFINITELY CLOSED HER BOOK.

AND MAYBE, IF WE'RE LUCKY, IT'LL STAY OUT OF CIRCULATION FOR A WHILE.

IT SEEMS LIKE THAT WAS A MILLION YEARS AGO INSTEAD OF JUST A FEW WEEKS.

THINGS FEEL...DIFFERENT NOW. EVERYTHING BEFORE JUST SEEMS SO DATED. IMPOSSIBLY PERFECT.

NO ONE BUT ME REMEMBERS WHAT HAPPENED. BUT THEY KNOW SOMETHING WENT WRONG.

SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE, THEY KNOW THEY DID HORRIBLE THINGS. THINGS THAT THEY CAN NEVER TAKE BACK.

MARY SHELLEY LOVECRAFT DIDN'T DESTROY HAVERHILL. SHE TOOK ITS INNOCENCE.

HAVERHILL HIGH SCHOOL

I'M LEAVING FOR COLLEGE IN THE FALL. NOT SURE WHERE. IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.

I STILL LOVE HAVERHILL.

BUT HAVERHILL DOESN'T NEED ME ANYMORE.

THE END.

SUPER SIDEKICK SLEEPOVER SLAUGHTER

SUPER SIDEKICK SLEEPOVER SLAUGHTER! PREQUEL

HACK/SLASH #29½ by TIM SEELEY & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

HIGHWAY 81. THIRTY-SIX MILES OUTSIDE ROANOKE, VIRGINIA.

CLICK --TUNED INTO LATE KNIGHT A.M. I'M YOUR HOST, ALAN KNIGHT.

TONIGHT WE'LL BE DISCUSSING THE S.K.K., OR THE SERIAL KILLER KILLER, FOLLOWING UP ON THE RASH OF SIGHTINGS IN CHICAGO LAST WEEK.

VLAD! WE'RE ON THE LATE KNIGHT AGAIN!

SNRRRRT. YES...VERY LATE. SO TIRED. SNRRK.

AND I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ME TO TURN THE RADIO DOWN.

SNNNNNNRT. HRRM...THANK YOU...

WISH I COULD TURN DOWN THAT *SNORE*, YA PHLEGMY BASTARD.

HEY, AL. JUST ME AGAIN. IT'S RONNIE IN JERSEY.

HEY, RONNIE. GOOD TO HEAR FROM A LONG-TIME LISTENER.

NEXT REST STOP 44 MILES

I KNOW THIS S.K.K. IS A PRETTY INTERESTING SUBJECT TO YOU AND ALL, BUT I GOTTA SAY: THIS WOMAN GETS TOO MUCH ATTENTION. SHE'S A KILLER...

AND, Y'KNOW, THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF HERO I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT.

I WISH YOU'D TALK MORE ABOUT SOME OF THE **REAL** HEROES THAT NEVER GOT RECOGNIZED.

I ASSUME YOU'RE SPEAKING OF COPS, FIREMEN, AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVANTS?

NO, AL, I'M TALKING ABOUT THE SUPERHEROES. I'M TALKING ABOUT **NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPY.**

WHO?

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

THOSE GUYS FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT. I JUST WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THEM.

WARRIORS

I MEAN, THE WAY THE WORLD IS TODAY, I JUST THINK KIDS AND TEENS--HELL EVERYONE...

YEEEE-HA, FUCKERS! I'M EVEN BETTER AT THIS GAME WHEN I'M *OFF* MY RITALIN!

WE COULD ALL USE SOME BETTER HEROES THAN A KILLER...

SIM! SIM! *DEUS!*

WHATEVER YOU SAY, BITCH.

I MEAN... RIGHT?

HEY, RONNIE.

DAISY!!

I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE ON THE PHONE!

NO, NO... IT'S OKAY. NO BIG DEAL.

I HOPE IT WASN'T AN IMPORTANT CALL.

OH NO. JUST CALLING THE LATE KNIGHT.

WAIT, YOU WERE CALLING AN A.M. RADIO SHOW WHILE THERE'S A PARTY GOING ON IN YOUR HOUSE?

I DIDN'T REALLY FEEL LIKE PARTYING TONIGHT. IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S THAT RARE FOR MY PARENTS TO LEAVE ROB AND ME THE HOUSE FOR A WEEKEND.

SO, I WAS JUST, UHM, KILLING TIME BETWEEN THE RADIO AND DOODLING.

YOU DRAW? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT! WHAT WERE YOU DRAWING?

YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THEM. I MEAN, YOU DON'T, DO YOU?

YES! I LOVE ART.

OKAY, WELL...THESE ARE JUST SKETCHES. DON'T BE TOO HARD ON THEM.

SO... UH... TA-DA.

HA! OH MY GOD! SUPERHEROES! THAT IS SO COOL!

ARE THESE FROM THE COMICS OR DID YOU MAKE THEM UP? I USED TO MAKE UP SUPERHEROES ALL THE TIME WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. I USED TO DRAW THIS DUO CALLED CHINCHILLA MAN AND DUSTY, AND--

I DIDN'T MAKE THESE UP.

SUPERHEROES ARE *REAL*, DAISY.

HEY, FAG!

I WISH YOU'D SHUT THE FUCK UP. I COULD HEAR YOU YAPPIN' THE WHOLE TIME I WAS TRYIN' TO FUCK THAT MEXICAN CHICK YOU BROUGHT OVER.

ACTUALLY, ROB, LUS IS BRAZILIAN.

WHATEVER. SHE SCREAMED IN SPANISH WHILE I WAS BONIN' HER, SO CLOSE ENOUGH.

ACTUALLY, IT'S PORTUGUESE.

Cheesey Cheese

ARE YOU CORRECTING ME, FAG?

NO, IT'S JUST--

DON'T TREAT ME LIKE ***I'M*** THE DUMB BROTHER. LAST TIME I CHECKED, ***YOU*** WERE THE ONE IN THE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CLASSES.

SORRY, ROB.

THAT'S BETTER. I'M HITTIN' THE SACK. YOU SHOULD TAKE A RIDE ON THE MEXICAN. SHE'S A REAL FREAK-OF-THE-EVENIN', MAN.

FEH. YOUR BROTHER IS A TOTAL DICK.

UM... WELL... DO YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE SUPERHEROES?

SURE, RONNIE.

IN THE FORTIES, THERE WERE ALL OF THESE AMERICANS--YOU KNOW, REAL *GO-GETTERS*-- LOOKING FOR A WAY TO HELP THE COUNTRY...

SOME OF THESE GUYS WERE WATCHING MOVIE SERIALS AND READING COMICS, AND THEY GOT INSPIRED BY CHARACTERS LIKE BATMAN, SUPERMAN, AND THE SHADOW.

Masked Vigilante KO's mugger

"MOST JUST JOINED THE POLICE OR SOMETHING, BUT SOME...SOME MADE THEMSELVES *COSTUMES* AND WENT TO THE STREETS TO FIGHT CRIME AND CORRUPTION. PEOPLE LIKE THE CRIMEBUSTER, DAREDEVIL, AND AIRBOY BATTLED THE BAD GUYS AT HOME AND OVERSEAS.

"THEY DIDN'T HAVE SUPERPOWERS LIKE THE COMIC BOOK GUYS. THEY WERE JUST YOUNG AND BALLSY."

SOME GOT BUSTED BY THE COPS FOR BEING VIGILANTES.

MOST QUIT WHEN THE FAD FADED AWAY.

BUT THERE WAS ONE PAIR OF GUYS. THEY KEPT GOING UNTIL THE FIGHT KILLED THEM...

NIGHTMARE & SLEEPY

NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPY

AND THE UNDYING JACK O'LANTERN!

WRESTLER BOB WHITE AND HIS KID MANAGER, TERRY WAKE, PATROL THE STREETS AT NIGHT AS CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE! BUT WHAT ELSE LURKS IN THE DARK PLACES? JOIN THEM AS THEY CONFRONT A PUMPKIN-FACED ASSASSIN WHO WILL NOT DIE!!

WHO IS THIS SPOOK, NIGHTMARE?

I DON'T KNOW, CHUM, BUT HE'S ABOUT TO FIND OUT HE'S MESSED WITH THE WRONG BOGEYMEN!

THE HOME OF JIMMY "THE VICE" MILLMAN.

SOMETHING SURE MUST HAVE THE VICE SCARED, EH, NIGHTMARE?

CAN YA BELIEVE IT? A GANGSTER CALLING ON *US* FOR PROTECTION!

AT EASE, CHUM. I KNOW YOU'VE HEARD STORIES OF THIS JACK O'LANTERN FELLA. HOW NONE OF HIS TARGETS HAVE EVER GOTTEN AWAY ALIVE. HOW HE CAN'T BE KILLED... BUT THOSE ARE JUST TALES DESIGNED TO *SCARE* PEOPLE.

SURE WORKS, DON'T IT?

OF COURSE. BUT THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE. WE LURK IN THE SHADOWS, TOO. WE TUSSLE WITH ALL THOSE SCARY THINGS, BECAUSE WE'RE JUST AS SCARY AS THEM. AND THEN WE DRAG THE NIGHT KICKING AND SCREAMING INTO THE LIGHT.

HEY, THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD LINE, NIGHTMARE. THINK I'LL--

WHAT THE--?

DON'T LOOK NOW, KID, BUT I THINK THE PUMPKIN IS INVITING US TO PLAY!

HEAD UPSTAIRS AND CHECK ON THE VICE. I'M GOING TO SEE IF I CAN CATCH OUR WOULD-BE ASSASSIN IN THE YARD!

OKAY! BE CAREFUL!

AT THE BEDROOM DOOR OF "THE VICE."

I HEARD COMMOTION! HAS THE *PUMPKIN MAN* COME FOR ME?

CALM DOWN, JIMMY. NIGHTMARE IS TAKING A PEEK RIGHT NOW.

I KNEW I NEVER SHOULDA CROSSED THAT *MR. PARK.* PEOPLE TOLD ME THAT DAMN CHINAMAN WAS INVOLVED WITH A *DANGEROUS CULT,* BUT I JUST HAD TO GET INVOLVED WITH DIRTIER CREEPS THAN ME...

JUST THINK, FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE YOU'RE ON THE SIDE OF THE *ANGELS!*

SO TRY TO CALM DOWN, AND GET SOME--

SLEEP?!

GLK!

SHUNK!!

OH GOSH. OH...

YOU'VE TAKEN YOUR LAST VICTIM, ASSASSIN!

TUNK!

GHA!

KRRRSH

YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS, CREEP!

DARN RIGHT HE WON'T!

HURRNGH! SLEEPY! GET ON THE PHONE AND RING THE COMMISSIONER!

TELL HIM WE'RE BRINGING IN A MURDERER.

UNGH. OH NO YOU DON'T. IF I GO...

KRASH!

SO DO YOU!!

BOB!

SOON

NO. LOOKS LIKE OUR *HALLOWEEN HIT MAN* GOT AWAY AGAIN. BUT HE LEFT SOMETHING.

DID YOU FIND THE BASTARD?

IT'S SOME KIND OF LANTERN, BUT GET THIS: ITS FIRE *DON'T SHED NO LIGHT.* IT'S TOTALLY BLACK.

AND TACKED TO IT IS A PICTURE OF *THE VICE...*

WEIRDEST CALLING CARD I EVER SEEN, THAT'S FER SURE.

I'D LIKE TO TAKE IT...RUN SOME TESTS.

YOU FELLAS ALWAYS BEEN GOOD WITH THE DEPARTMENT, SLEEPY. WHATEVER WE CAN DO TO HELP YOU CATCH THIS CREEP, YOU LET US KNOW.

YOU WON'T HAVE DIED IN VAIN, BOB. I'M GOING TO FIND THE JACK O' LANTERN, AND ANY OTHER EVIL THAT THREATENS THE NIGHT...

AND DRAG IT KICKING AND SCREAMING INTO THE LIGHT.

THE END!

DAMN, RONNIE. HOW THE HELL DO YOU GET INTO SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

MY DAD WAS ALWAYS REALLY INTO BOXING. I STARTED READING ALL HIS BOOKS, AND WHEN I FOUND OUT ABOUT BOB WHITE, SOMETHING JUST CLICKED. I WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ALL THESE SUPER-GUYS.

IF YOU STUDIED THIS WELL FOR SCHOOL, YOU WOULDN'T BE IN THE ALTERNATIVE CLASSES WITH ME. HA HA.

Boxer' Bob White Dies, revealed to be Vigilante

I'M IN THE ALT. ED. CLASSES BECAUSE MY PARENTS ARE METH ADDICTS WHO TOOK ME OUT OF SCHOOL SO OFTEN THAT I'M BEHIND BY A COUPLE OF YEARS.

UH... RIGHT.

SO, NIGHTMARE GOT KILLED. WHAT HAPPENED TO SLEEPY?

WELL, SUPERHERO IDENTITIES ARE LIKE TITLES OR MANTLES. THEY GET PASSED DOWN. WHEN THE HERO DIES, THE SIDEKICK STEPS UP...

DEVIL'S DUE PUBLISHING
30¢

Clue Comics presents

NIGHTMARE and SLEEPY

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NO. 328
NOV.

I'VE BEEN MARKED FOR DEATH, NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPY!

AND I'M TAKING BOTH OF YOU WITH ME!

SISTER SACRILEGE RETURNS!

AND WHO IS THE ASSASSIN WHO LURKS IN THE SHADOWS?!

SOUTHSIDE BAY DOCKS.

YOU SURE I'M READY FOR THIS, MR. WAKE? I MEAN, I'M HONORED AND ALL. I HAVE EVERY NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPY MEMORABILIA ITEM EVER MADE...

INCLUDING THE HARD-TO-FIND MEGO DOLLS!

I'M SURE. YOU'RE GOING TO BE A GREAT *SLEEPY*. AND IT'S *NIGHTMARE* WHEN I'M IN UNIFORM.

MAN, I JUST DON'T FEEL LIKE A HERO, Y'KNOW? I'M USED TO BEIN' THE WEIRD KID WHO'S ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT GHOSTS AND ALIENS.

BOB WHITE TAUGHT ME EVERY-THING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT BEING A CRIMEFIGHTER.

ABOVE ALL, HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO PICK A GOOD PARTNER.

NOW, FACE FORWARD AND KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN. *SISTER SACRILEGE* IS SUPPOSED TO BE MEETING A CONTACT TO PICK UP SOME KIND OF CONTRABAND.

AND THERE SHE IS, RIGHT ON TIME.

LET'S GO, PARTNER.

JUST REMEMBER WHO WE ARE. WHAT WE DO.

YEAH, YEAH. DRAG THE NIGHT INTO THE LIGHT AND ALL THAT.

SISTER SACRILEGE! YOU'RE WANTED FOR A LIST OF CRIMES LONGER THAN THE MAREMOBILE.

TURN YOURSELF IN AND--

SURRENDER...?

NIGHTMARE...

I...GESÙ CRISTO, SALVO... ME...

WH--WHO DID THIS TO YOU?!

MY FAULT...BROUGHT THIS UPON MYSELF. TRIED TO STEAL FROM THEM.

TRIED TO STEAL FROM THE MEN OF THE *BLACK LAMP!*

BLACK LAMP?

WAS THE MAN WHO DID THIS TO YOU--DID HE WEAR A *PUMPKIN MASK?*

GESÙ CRISTO... GESÙ...

HUNH...

I'M SORRY, ANJELICA. SO--

BOSS! WE HAVE COMPANY, MAN!

"IT'S HIM."

IT'S HIM!!

WAIT! WHAT ABOUT THE SISTER? WH--WHAT ABOUT ME?!

WHAT'D YOU DO, WOMAN?

THAT PUMPKIN GUY ***KILLED*** THE ORIGINAL NIGHTMARE.

NOW YOU'RE BRINGING HIM DOWN ON TERRY? WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

YOU CAN THANK ME BY NOT EVER TRYING TO KILL US AGAIN. NOW I GOTTA HELP THE BOSS!

UHNNN...NO. HE IS ***UNSTOPPABLE***...

COME ON OUT, YOU SQUASH-FACED FREAK! COME ON--

HUHN.

ALAN...

OH MAN. BOSS...I USED ALL MY STUFF ON SACRILEGE.

IT DOESN'T... IT DOESN'T MATTER...

YOU WANT ME TO AVENGE YOU? YOU WANT ME TO TAKE ON THE MASK? I'LL FIND THIS BLACK LAMP PUMPKIN GUY. I'LL BE THE NEW NIGHTMARE.

NO... BURN THE MASK. I LIVED MY LIFE FOR REVENGE.

AND NOW IT'S... ⁜

LATER...

I DID WHAT YOU SAID. I BURNED THE COSTUMES.

NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPY MAY BE DEAD.

BUT THE DARKNESS AIN'T HEARD THE LAST OF ME.

THE END.

SEE, YOU THINK YOU'RE ALL THAT ON GUITAR, BUT YOU NEED A BADASS BROTHER LIKE ME ON DRUMS.

BAH. AND YOU WONDER WHY I GO TO SEE RONNIE'S BROTHER INSTEAD OF HANGING OUT WITH YOU TWO.

HEY, GUYS... UH, SO...WHAT'S GOING ON IN HERE?

RONNIE WAS JUST SHOWING ME ALL THIS CRAZY RESEARCH HE DID ABOUT, LIKE, OLD-TIMEY SUPERHEROES.

HE'S PRACTICALLY A SCHOLAR IN THIS STUFF.

HE EVEN DREW SOME REALLY COOL COSTUMES!

I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO WAIT TO TELL THEM, RONNIE.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME.

I KNOW, I KNOW. BUT I GOT SO EXCITED. NOT TELLING THESE GUYS THAT YOU AND I ARE TOGETHER WAS HARD ENOUGH.

TOGETHER?

WE'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT HOW NO ONE EXPECTS MUCH FROM US. THEY THINK WE'RE ALL LOSERS...THAT WE'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING.

BUT LYNN AND I...WELL, WE FOUND SOMETHING. SOMETHING CRAZY AND AWESOME. IT'S GOING TO LET US BECOME MORE THAN LOSERS AND DEAD-ENDERS.

INSTEAD OF LOOKING DOWN ON US, ALL THOSE PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO LOOK UP TO US.

WE'RE GOING TO BE *SUPERHEROES!*

HIGHWAY 81.

GO AHEAD, CALLER. YOU'RE ON WITH THE LATE KNIGHT.

HEY, AL. I JUST WANTED TO COUNTER THE CALLER FROM EARLIER THIS EVENING WHO THOUGHT THAT S.K.K. WAS INFERIOR TO THIS NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPWALKER DUO.

SLEEPY.

WHATEVER. I JUST THINK THE S.K.K. IS BETTER, CUZ I'VE SEEN HER NAKED ON THE INTERNET AND SHE IS **FINE**.

I DON'T KNOW IF SHE REALLY KILLS KILLERS OR NOT, BUT SHE'S GOT A NICE RACK AND AN UNSHAVEN--

GOD DAMN IT.

I'M ASSUMING YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE RUMOR THAT THE S.K.K. HAS APPEARED ON THE SUICIDE-GIRLS WEBSITE, CALLER.

UFO!

BIGFOOT SPOTTED

THAT, OF COURSE, HAS NEVER BEEN SUBSTANTIATED. BUT, HEY, IF YOUR VERSION OF DISCOVERING THE TRUTH IS SEARCHING ALT-PORN WEBSITES, THEN, BY ALL MEANS, DISCOVER AWAY.

WE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW NIGHT WITH NOTED AUTHOR FATHER EVAN PARRISH TO DISCUSS HIS CONTROVERSIAL NEW BOOK, *JESUS VERSUS VAMPIRES: CLONING CHRIST TO BATTLE CREATURES OF THE NIGHT.*

SO, UNTIL THE NIGHT IS DRAGGED INTO THE LIGHT, THIS IS ALAN KNIGHT SAYING "GOOD MORNING."

THE END.

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY.

THE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT CLUB

NO ONE SHALL ESCAPE THE EVIL MIGHT OF DR. DRACULA!!

MEMBERS ONLY
THIS IS A PRIVATE CLUB, FOR PAYING MEMBERS ONLY. IF YOU WISH TO JOIN, FORGET IT!

OH! OH NO! SUPERHEROINES! YOU MUSTN'T!!

OOM
N USE

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO STOP DR. DRAC--

=MMMF=

I TRUST YOUR VISIT WAS ACCEPTABLE, MR. RATCLIFFE?

YOUR GIRLS NEVER DISAPPOINT...

...SISTER SACRILEGE.

SILLY BOY. NO ONE CALLS ME THAT ANYMORE. I AM MADAME ANJELICA NOW.

AND YOU STILL HAVE YOUR MASK ON.

OH. HA. SOMETIMES I FORGET I HAVE IT ON.

THAT EVER HAPPEN TO YOU, BACK IN THE DAY?

THE MASK IS ONLY FANTASY.

HEH...

NOT FOR LONG.

KEEP THE CHANGE.

PRETTY SOON THERE'LL BE A LOT MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM.

YOU SHOULD STOP BY THE LAIR SOMETIME. EVERYONE MISSES YOU.

AND YOU'D DO WELL TO GET IN THEIR GOOD GRACES NOW...

...BEFORE YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER USELESS OLD COW.

SEE YOU SOON, SIST--

=AHEM=

MADAME.

IT WORKS. HOLY SHIT, GUYS. IT TOTALLY FUCKING WORKS!

LYNN, I USED THE *GODBOX* MACHINE LIKE THE BOOK SAID. I CAN FEEL IT.

NO TRESSPASSING PRIVATE PROPERTY

I'M ALL KEYED UP, LIKE I HAD TOO MANY ENERGY DRINKS. OR JUST ENOUGH... OR...I DON'T KNOW.

IT JUST FEELS SO GOOD.

I'M STRONG NOW. *REALLY* STRONG. I MEAN, MY BROTHER WILL NEVER MESS WITH ME AGAIN.

I KNOW WE SAID WE'D ALL DO IT TOGETHER, BUT I WANTED TO TEST IT FIRST.

I HAD TO MAKE SURE IT WOULDN'T TURN US INTO ZOMBIES OR EVAPORATE US, RIGHT?

JUST CALL ME RONNIE CARPENTER, THE LAB RAT. WAIT. NO. HAHA.

DON'T CALL ME THE LAB RAT. I'VE GOT A *BETTER* NAME...

•REC

CALL ME NIGHTMARE.

YOU LIKE THAT? I DID, LIKE, A *BATMAN* MOVIE VOICE. SOMEBODY TELL CHRISTIAN BALE IT ISN'T *THAT* HARD.

ANYWAY, YOU GUYS SHOULD BE WATCHING THIS VIDEO ABOUT THE TIME I COME IN FROM A NIGHT OF PLAYING HERO. I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT, WHEN YOU JOIN ME. WE'RE GOING TO BE TEENAGE GODDAMN SUPER-SIDEKICKS!

AFTER WE PARTY, OF COURSE.

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA.

RIIIING RIIIING

DAMN. THEY'RE STARTING EARLY TONIGHT.

THIS IS LATE KNIGHT A.M. WITH ALAN KNIGHT. HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

IT'S YOUR BIGGEST FAN.

BIGGEST? I HAVE MORE THAN ONE?

HE SAID HE CALLED EARLY BECAUSE HE WANTED TO TALK TO YOU OFF-AIR.

=SIGH= I'LL TAKE IT.

RONNIE CARPENTER. HOW ARE YOU, SON? GOT ANY MORE STORIES ABOUT NIGHTTIME AND SLEEPWALKER FOR ME?

IT'S OKAY, AL. YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND YOU WEREN'T SLEEPY WHEN YOU'RE NOT ON-AIR. IT'S JUST YOU AND ME.

WHAT CAN I DO YOU FOR, RON?

I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT THE LEGACY OF NIGHTMARE AND SLEEPY IS SAFE WITH ME.

I'M GOING TO BE A GREAT NIGHTMARE. AS GOOD AS BOB OR TERRY.

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS BEFORE, RONNIE. WE AGREED THAT PLAYING DRESS-UP IS A GOOD WAY TO GET KILLED.

THAT WAS BEFORE I FOUND THE GODBOX. NOW I'M JUST LIKE THE COMIC BOOK GUYS, LEAPING TALL BUILDINGS AND ALL THAT STUFF.

JESUS, RONNIE. ARE YOU USING? I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU'D NEVER TOUCH THAT CRAP BECAUSE OF YOUR PARENTS.

I'M NOT HIGH. I'M A SUPERHERO. MY FRIENDS AND I ARE GOING TO SAVE THE GODDAMN WORLD.

AND WE'RE *NOT* GOING TO GET KILLED DOING IT.

AGHK!

CRICK

CARPENTER! WHAT'S GOING ON?!

AH... FUH...STABBED ME...

WHUH... YOU CUH...YOU CAN'T...

GHUNH.

CHOOM

I'M ST-STUCK. PLEASE.

PLEASE.

SHUNK

SHUNK

SHUNK

RONNIE! WHERE ARE YOU? GIVE ME AN ADDRESS!

FWUMP

NUHN... PUM... PUMMM...

PUMMKIIN FAAACE--

TCHK

SPENCER PUMP 'N' GO.

YORK, PENNSYLVANIA.

GOOD AS NEW.

HURRR.

WHAT'S THAT?

HURR. NOTHING.

NO, SERIOUSLY. WHAT WERE YOU WORKING ON IN THE BATHROOM?

INDULGE ME. I'M BORED ENOUGH TO SPEND FIFTEEN MINUTES CLEANING MY BAT, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

I AM WORKING ON A PROJECT. OR A STUDY MAYBE, YES?

WHEN WE USE PUBLIC RESTROOMS, I SEE WHAT OTHER MEN HAVE WRITTEN ON STALL WALLS.

IT IS OFTEN VERY SIMILAR. SO I AM COUNTING IT.

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON WHAT MEN DOODLE WHILE THEY SHIT.

WHAT ARE YOUR FINDINGS, PROFESSOR?

I HAVE COUNTED THIRTY-SEVEN "FUCK YOU..."

...TWENTY-THREE "HERE I SIT BROKEN HEARTED" STORIES...

...THIRTY-THREE PHONE NUMBERS, NINE "JESUS SAVES"--

OKAY, OKAY. I GET IT.

SO WHAT'S THE MOST COMMON MEN'S STALL GRAFFITI?

DRAWINGS OF PENISES.

PENISES?

YES. USUALLY WITH TESTICLES ALSO. SOMETIMES PUBES.

THAT'S FUCKED UP. WHY WOULD *MEN* DRAW PENISES?

THAT'S TOTALLY GOT TO BE SOME KIND OF WEIRD PSYCHOLOGICAL THING, RIGHT? LIKE A REPRESSED GAY URGE...

MAYBE A POWER TRIP OR A TERRITORIAL MARKING.

HEE HEE.

PENIS.

NEAR EMINENCE, INDIANA.

SHIT, CHRIS. WITH AIM LIKE THAT, IT'S A WONDER YOU KNOCKED UP YOUR GIRL.

HILARIOUS, REILLY.

KRANK SPENDS AN AWFUL LOTTA TIME WITH THE SHERIFF.

I SUPPOSE. BUT IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE HER AGE AROUND HERE TO HANG OUT WITH.

EXCUSE ME. I SHOULD TAKE THIS...

HE'S ALREADY GOT A PREGNANT, UNWEDDED WOMAN AT HOME, S'ALL I'M SAYIN'.

DRINK YOUR BEER.

HOLY SHIT.

CASSIE! WE JUST GOT AN EMAIL ABOUT A CASE. AND YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO SENT IT...

OKAY, THAT WOULD BE UNEXPECTED, BUT IT'S NOT LOU FERRIGNO.

ALAN KNIGHT. THE LATE KNIGHT HIMSELF...

...AND HE NEEDS YOUR SERIAL KILLER KILLIN' ASS TO CALL HIM *RIGHT* NOW.

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

RED PINE TRAILER COURT.

HEY, LYNN. I DIDN'T MEAN TO GET YOU OUT OF THE SHOWER.

IT'S FINE, DAISY. I HAD A LATE SHIFT AT THE BUFFET. DIDN'T WANT TO GO TO BED SMELLING OF HAM AND GRANDPARENTS.

UM, SO, I FINISHED YOUR COSTUME. IT TOOK THE LONGEST.

REALLY? BUT MINE HAS THE LEAST FABRIC TO IT. HA HA.

ACTUALLY, FANTOMAH'S IS SKIMPIER.

OH, RIGHT. SPOOKY JUNGLE BITCH. PERFECT FOR LUS.

WELL, I SHOULD GET GOING.

WAIT...UH. LOOK, I'M SORRY.

SORRY? FOR WHAT?

Y'KNOW. FOR RONNIE. I KNEW YOU LIKED HIM. BUT, IT JUST...

STOP. I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.

YOU ARE?

YES. YOU'RE BOTH MY FRIENDS. THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING.

THANKS, DAISY. SEE YOU TOMORROW, RIGHT?

OH YEAH! TOTALLY!

FUCK.

YES, SIR. WOW. UM...YES, WE CAN DO THAT.

NO, TRUST ME. WE'VE HEARD WEIRDER.

HURRRM.

OKAY... UH HUH.

EXCUSE ME A SECOND, MR. KNIGHT.

STOP IT! *YES*, I *AM* NERVOUS. *YES*, I *AM* SWEATING. HE'S THE GODDAMN LATE KNIGHT!

SORRY ABOUT THAT.

OKAY. YES, WE'RE NOT TOO FAR FROM THERE NOW...

OH...

TELL HER WE'LL BE THERE IN THE MORNING, MR. KNIGHT...OKAY. GOOD-BYE.

WHAT DID THE RADIO-MAN SAY?

THERE'S A SLASHER HUNTING KIDS IN NEW JERSEY, BUT IT GETS WORSE...THESE KIDS ARE *SUPERHEROES*.

AH?

THEN IT GETS WORSE YET...

HE THINKS SAMHAIN IS THE SLASHER.

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

RONNNNNIIE!

WHERE ARE YA, YA FAG?

I GOT YOUR NOTE. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE INVITING ME TO JOIN YOUR LITTLE NERD CREW.

SUPERHEROES?

YOU ARE *NEVER* GONNA GET LAID NOW.

THERE YOU ARE. NICE.

REALLY PLAYING UP THIS BATMAN THING, HUH?

LOOK, I KNOW I GIVE YOU A LOT OF HELL. ESPECIALLY SINCE MOM AND DAD TURNED INTO POWDER MONKEYS. BUT...IT WAS COOL OF YOU TO MAKE ME THIS COSTUME AND STUFF.

I REALLY LIKE THE SKULL. KINDA MISFITS BY WAY OF IRON MAIDEN.

WOAH. DAMN, RONNIE. YOUR SUIT IS FUCKING BRUTAL METAL. WHAT'S YOUR CODE-NAME? SOMETHIN' LIKE HALLOWEEN MAN, RIGHT?

OH SHIT! THAT'S *MY* KNIFE, YOU FAG. BEEN LOOKING FOR THAT!

S'COOL. YOU CAN BUM IT. AS LONG AS I CAN HELP SAVE SOME DAMSELS IN DISTRESS...

THEN FUCK 'EM, RIGHT?

THWUK

=HUK=

UH... THOUGHT WE WERE GONNA BE...

...GOOD GUYS...=(

YOU *ARE* GOOD GUYS...

AND I'M YOUR *BAD* GUY.

FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

HURRRM. NOT WHAT I IMAGINED FOR THE HOME OF A SUPERVILLAINESS, YES?

QUIET FOR A SECOND.

AGAIN?

PICK UP, GODDAMN IT! OR CALL ME BACK, YOU LITTLE FUCKING ELF!

WE WILL FIND THEM. THEY MAY HAVE NO SIGNAL.

OR MAYBE SAMHAIN KILLED VENUS AND TOOK A TRIP TO JERSEY TO STAB SOME KIDS IN TIGHTS.

HURRM. OR THAT.

555

UH...SISTER SACRILEGE?

S/. ALAN TOLD ME YOU WERE COMING. PLEASE, COME IN. AND HEAD DOWNSTAIRS. MY HUSBAND IS STILL SLEEPING.

HURR. THIS IS A MUCH BETTER BASEMENT THAN THE ONE I LIVED IN.

I ASSUME ALAN TOLD YOU HOW HE AND I KNOW EACH OTHER.

YEAH. HE SAID YOU USED TO DRESS IN RED LEATHER AND RUN A BUNCH OF VICE OPERATIONS AROUND NEW YORK CITY.

HE ALSO SAID HE USED TO BE A SIDEKICK TO A SKULL-HEADED MAN WHO FOUGHT YOU.

IT SOUNDS SO CHILDISH WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, BUT IT'S THE TRUTH.

NOW HE'S A RADIO PERSONALITY AND I AM AN AGING WOMAN WITH A VERY SWEET HUSBAND AND AN EVER-EXPANDING REAR END.

LOOK, MR. KNIGHT TOLD US TO ASK YOU ABOUT SOMETHING CALLED "THE GODBOX."

IF YOU COULD TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW, YOU COULD HELP US SAVE SOME GEEKS FROM GOING UNDER THE KNIFE.

No.1

The

ACTION COMIC

JUNE, 1938

10¢

YES. THE GODBOX...

WHEN WE PLAYED HERO AND VILLAIN, YOU SEE, WE WERE ALL MISSING SOMETHING SHARED BY THE CHARACTERS IN THE COMIC BOOKS.

WE HAD NO SUPERHUMAN POWERS. WE WERE JUST PEOPLE...CRIMINALS AND DO-GOODERS WEARING NOVELTY COSTUMES.

EXCEPT FOR ONE. SHE WAS CALLED FANTOMAH, MYSTERY WOMAN OF THE JUNGLE. NO ONE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS, ONLY THAT SHE WAS NOT HUMAN. *INUMANA.* AND THAT SHE COULD DO WHATEVER SHE WANTED--FLY. LIFT A BUS. TURN MEN INTO BEASTS...

A GROUP OF BRILLIANT CRIMINALS WITH DREAMS BEYOND PETTY LARCENY BANDED TOGETHER TO DEFEAT FANTOMAH AND FIND A MEANS OF OBTAINING HER GODLIKE POWERS.

THE CRIME CABAL DISCOVERED THAT FANTOMAH HAD ONE WEAKNESS: A RARE PLANT WITH UNUSUAL PROPERTIES. THE PLANT WAS USED AND CULTIVATED BY A *CULT*--

STOP.

LET ME GUESS. THE CULT IS CALLED THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY.

WHEN THE CROOKS CROSSED THEM, THE SOCIETY SENT OUT A GRIM MOTHERFUCKER IN A PUMPKIN MASK TO TUCK THEM INTO THEIR SOIL BEDS.

YES. IT IS THIS MAN, CALLED SAMHAIN, WHO KILLED BOTH MEN WHO WORE THE MASK OF NIGHTMARE.

HE ALMOST KILLED ME, AS WELL, BUT ALAN SAVED MY LIFE.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, VLAD, BUT I'M GETTING ***REALLY*** BORED WITH THIS BLACK FLOWER CRAP ALREADY.

YES. I LIKED OUR OLD BAD GUYS BETTER.

IT WAS RUMORED THAT THE CABAL CREATED A DEVICE THAT COULD GRANT POWERS LIKE FANTOMAH'S.

THE GODBOX. SOUNDS LIKE THESE KIDS FOUND IT AND BROUGHT SAMHAIN DOWN ON THEIR IDIOT HEADS.

IF WE CAN GET THE BOX, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SAVE THE TEENS.

ALAN SAID THEIR LEADER LIVES IN PATERSON, NEW JERSEY. BUT I'M BETTING THE GODBOX ISN'T IN THE FRONT WINDOW OF THE FUCKING PIER ONE. BY THE TIME WE FIND IT, THE TWEEN TITANS WILL BE KID CASSEROLE.

CAPES AND MASKS HAVE RECENTLY BECOME FASHIONABLE AGAIN.

AND THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT GIVEN UP ON TAKING OVER THE WORLD.

IF THE GODBOX EXISTS, THEY WILL KNOW WHERE IT IS.

POINT US IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, AND WE'LL STOMP MASKED ASS UNTIL WE FIND IT.

I'M AFRAID IT WON'T BE QUITE SO SIMPLE.

THE ARCTIC LAIR IS...HOSTILE TO OUTSIDERS. EXTRAORDINARILY DANGEROUS. BECAUSE OF MY HISTORY AND MY CURRENT WORK, I AM CONSIDERED AN INSIDER. YOU WILL NEED ME TO SPONSOR YOU.

AND YOU WILL NEED A COSTUME.

HUR HUR. I AM HAPPY FOR YOU TO BE WEARING A NUN COSTUME AGAIN.

YEAH, LAUGH NOW, VLAD...

BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY SIDEKICK.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

G'MORNING, HUN.

YOU WERE OUT LATE LAST NIGHT.

YEAH, I ENDED UP PLAYING POOL WITH THE SHERIFF FOR A FEW HOURS.

SORRY.

SORRY? YOU COMPLETELY FORGOT TO TAKE POOCH OUT TO GO POTTY, AND HE REFUSES TO WAKE ME UP, EVEN IF HE HAS TO GO.

Humble Pooch held it as long as he could. But he soiled the rug. Oh, the soils!

YOU'RE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME WITH MAGGIE. I DON'T KNOW IF I LIKE THAT.

OH C'MON, LISA. WE JUST ENJOY HANGING OUT.

I DON'T LIKE HER. I SAVE ALL OF THAT FOR YOU.

OKAY. JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T FORGET YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES. WE HAVE A BABY COMING.

I KNOW. ALL MY ATTENTION IS ON YOU AND THE BABY.

:Snifffff:

Pooch can smell it when you lie.

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

JAGODINSKI!!!

ROBBINS
manager

YES, MR. ROBBINS?

LYNN! I TOLD YOU THAT YOUR IDIOT FRIENDS AREN'T ALLOWED TO HANG OUT HERE ANYMORE!

MY FRIENDS?

YOU HAVE US CONFUSED WITH SOMEONE ELSE, *OLD COUNTRY BASTARD!*

I AM THE SUPERHERO KNOWN AS *CRASH KID!*

THE HEAP AND I ARE MEMBERS OF THE ELITE TEEN SUPERTEAM, *THE ALTERNATIVES!*

AND WE AIN'T GONNA LET YOU HYPNOTIZE ALL THESE FATTIES WITH YOUR EVIL *BUFFET RAY!*

MEANWHILE...

GODDAMNIT.

FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

MERAVIGLIOSO! THE BIG BOY MAKES *QUITE* THE VILLAIN.

I DID WELL WITH JUST A FEW ODDS AND ENDS, NO?

MY QUESTION IS: WHAT KIND OF PERSON HAS A GIMP MASK AMONG THEIR "ODDS AND ENDS"?

SHUSH. I HAVE A BETTER QUESTION. IS THE WORLD READY FOR...

SISTER SACRILEGE AND *ALTAR BOY?*

I AM GOING TO HELL FOR SURE, YES?

TO BE CONTINUED!

MEGATECH CORPORATE OFFICE.

NEW YORK CITY.

LOMBARDI!

JUST THE MAN I WANTED TO SEE.

Y-YESSIR?

I CAME IN HERE TO GET THAT FOURTH QUARTER LOSS PROJECTION.

YOU WEREN'T HERE, SO I FIGURED I'D JUST GRAB IT MYSELF.

SO I CLICK ON THIS HERE POWERPOINT DOC, AND Y'KNOW WHAT I GET?

=AHEM=

NO. I DON'T, BOB.

SOME KIND OF TIMELINE FOR KILLING OFF TEEN SUPERHEROES IN AN ABANDONED LAB.

I CAN EXPLAIN!

SAVE IT, KURT, I'M HIP.

I JUST DON'T WANT MY EMPLOYEES PLAYING THEIR LITTLE MMORPGS ON WORK TIME.

ESPECIALLY NOT IN THIS ECONOMY.

CAPICHE, LOMBARDI?

WHEN I'M KING, YOU'LL JOIN THOSE KIDS ON THE PILE.

WHAT'S THAT?

CAPICHE, BOB.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CLASSROOM.
PATERSON EAST HIGH.
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

"I KEEP... PICTURING ALL THESE LITTLE KIDS PLAYING SOME GAME IN THIS BIG FIELD OF RUH-RYE AND ALL.

"THOUSANDS OF...LI-LITTLE KIDS, AND NOBODY'S AROUND-- NOBODY BIG, I MEAN-- EXCEPT ME.

"AND I'M STANDING ON THE EDGE OF SOME CUH-CRAZY CLIFF."

JESUS CRISTO. SPIT IT OUT.

FUCK YOU, LUZ. AT LEAST DAISY DIDN'T BLOW RONNIE'S RETARD BROTHER.

ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH READING FOR TODAY. AND FOR THE WEEK, ACTUALLY.

HAVE A GOOD WEEKEND. WOULD ONE OF YOU TELL RONNIE WHAT HE MISSED ON HIS UNEXCUSED DAY OFF?

AND TRY TO BEHAVE LIKE THE UPSTANDING CITIZENS I KNOW YOU ARE.

UPSTANDING CITIZENS? WE'RE GOING TO GET THE KEYS TO THE CITY.

I WAS JUST HOPIN' FOR ACTION FIGURES.

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY.

KRAK

GHAH!

I'M SORRY. I DID NOT HAVE AN ALARM CLOCK, BUT I HAVE FOUND I CAN GET QUITE A LOUD NOISE OUT OF MY WHIP.

UNH. IT'S TIME TO GET UP ALREADY?

YES. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WILL OPEN IN AN HOUR AND WE NEED TO GET YOU TO THE ARCTIC LAIR SOON IF YOU ARE TO HELP THOSE TEENAGERS.

VLAD, WHY DID YOU NOT SLEEP IN THE BED?

HURRM. IT HAS STRANGE... STAINS.

ARE YOU *SURE* I HAVE TO WEAR THIS?

VLAD AND I HAVE PRETTY MUCH PERFECTED THE "GRAB-AND-THREATEN" METHOD OF INFORMATION RETRIEVAL.

TRYING TO BEAT INFORMATION OUT OF THESE PEOPLE WILL GET YOU NOTHING.

ONLY ONE, PERHAPS TWO, KNOW OF THE ENTIRE PLAN, AND THEY WILL NOT REVEAL IT UNTIL THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

THEY ACT AS IF THEY'RE IN A MOVIE OR A COMIC BOOK, SO THEY'LL ONLY SHARE THEIR DASTARDLY MASTER PLAN WHEN THE HERO IS TIED UP AND AT THEIR MERCY.

I'VE RECENTLY BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THAT SORT OF PHENOMENON.

YOU MUST BE CAREFUL.

ADULTS DRESSED IN COSTUMES MAY SEEM SILLY, BUT THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SOME TRULY EVIL AND DANGEROUS PEOPLE AMONG THEM.

KRAK

I CAN BE DANGEROUS, TOO.

I COULD GET *USED* TO THIS.

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

I'M GONNA GIVE MYSELF SOME CRAZY-ASS PLANT POWERS.

I WANNA CONTROL TREES AND SHIT, TO STOP CROOKS, RIGHT?

MAYBE GROW A BUNCH OF REAL GOOD WEED, TOO.

RONNIE ONLY FIGURED OUT HOW TO DIAL UP THE SUPER-STRENGTH POWER SET.

WE'RE ALL GONNA HAVE THE SAME POWERS.

MAN, THE ORIGINAL HEAP WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED.

ME CARRYING ON HIS NAME, BUT ALLS I CAN DO IS LIFT SHIT.

THE HEAP WAS A ***REAL*** MONSTER. HE WASN'T NO UNCLE TOM MONSTER LIKE THAT ORANGE ***THING***.

HEAP WOULD RIP YOUR DAMN HEAD OFF AND PLANT MOSS IN YOUR NECK.

RONNIE'S GOT TO WORK ON FIXIN' UP THAT GODBOX.

LYNN, WHERE ***IS*** RONNIE ANYWAY? DID YOU HEAR FROM HIM?

NO, NOT YET. BUT HE'LL BE THERE.

RONNIE PROBABLY HAD SO MUCH FUN KICKING ASS HE DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE WHAT TIME IT WAS.

HE'D BETTER HAVE SAVED SOME CROOKS FOR ***CRASH KID***.

KA-POW!

KRAK!

NUT PUNCH!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I AM SO BORED IN THIS COUNTRY THAT I HAVE GONE ALONG WITH THIS.

HEY, DON'T DISS THE U.S., BABY.

I MEAN, JUST *TRY* AND FIND AN ABANDONED SUPERSOLDIER PROJECT IN BRAZIL.

WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, IT DOES SOUND KIND OF... WEIRD.

ARE YOU GUYS SURE WE SHOULD DO THIS?

JESUS, DAISY. WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO RUIN EVERYTHING WITH YOUR CHICKEN-SHIT CRAP?

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU, BUT MY LIFE BLOWS.

MY PARENTS ARE ASSHOLES. I SUCK AT SCHOOL. I HAVE NO FUTURE.

BUT THE GODBOX IS GIVING US A CHANCE TO LIVE THE KIND OF LIVES YOU ONLY SEE IN COMICS AND MOVIES.

WIDESCREEN. HYPER-COLOR.

MY OLD LIFE CAN KISS MY NEW LIFE'S TIGHT LITTLE SPANDEX-CLAD ASS.

NICE. SPOKEN LIKE A WHITE TRASH CAPTAIN AMERICA.

BULLSHIT.

I THINK SHE JUST HIT ON OUR BATTLE CRY.

SOON.

MAN, YOU LOOK LIKE SOME KINDA GAY NAZI VERSION OF THE BOY WONDER.

GO EAT SOME CANNED CORN, GREEN GIANT.

UH...HEY, GUYS.

"EVIL FEARS THE FEARLESS FLAMINGO!"

UM... RIGHT?

DAMN, GIRL, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD IT IN YOU!

HEY! *MENINOS!*

"WHO DARES EXPLORE THE MYSTERY WOMAN OF THE JUNGLE?"

LUZ, I JUST WANNA SAY THAT YOU GIVE ME A GIANT-SIZED MAN-THING.

OH FOR CHRISTSAKE...

NUTLEY TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY.

SERIOUSLY?

BEER

THE ARCTIC LAIR
TONIGHT'S SPECIAL :
$1 DRAFTS

THIS CAN'T BE THE RIGHT PLACE.

UNNH... MAN.

YEEEAAAAAH.

IT IS THE RIGHT PLACE.

TRY NOT TO TURN ME INTO A SUPERHUMAN VEGETABLE, MS. U.S. JONES.

RONNIE AND I WENT OVER THIS DIAGRAM A MILLION TIMES. YOU SAW HIS VIDEO. IT WORKS.

NOW SHUT UP, LIE BACK, AND LET ME MAKE YOU INTO THE HULK.

THE HEA-- URK.

AHUHHHNNH!

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK, BIG GUY?

PTOO.

OH, I GUESS YOU LIKE IT.

I'M NEXT!
LET ME GO FIRST.
WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?
SEE, I TOLD YA YOU DON'T NEED NO DIET, DAISY.
I GOT A TEXT FROM RONNIE!
COOL. IS HE HERE?
HE WANTS TO MEET ME IN THE STOREROOM. WHEN WE FIRST FOUND THIS PLACE THAT'S WHERE WE FIRST...AHEM...
WELL, ANYWAY, IT'S KIND OF A ROMANTIC SPOT FOR US.
I'LL BE BACK WITH RONNIE AND WE CAN REALLY GET THIS PARTY STARTED.
YEAH. YOU GO HAVE FUN WITH YOUR BOYFRIEND.
OOOHHH!!
I'LL JUST BE HERE, GETTING SUPERPOWERS, I GUESS.

WE'RE IN. BUT WHERE DO WE START?

I CANNOT TELL IF THIS IS GREAT OR HORRIBLE.

OOOH. BIG AND THREATENING. I LOVE IT. CAN I BORROW YOUR SIDEKICK FOR A FEW MINUTES?

URR?

ALTAR BOY'S ASS BELONGS TO SISTER SACRILEGE!

OOOH! YOU GO, SWEETHEART!

WELCOME TO *THE ARCTIC LAIR!*

IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT AND THAT MEANS IT'S TIME FOR *PLOT REVEALS!* THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SIGNED UP.

WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME, PLEASE COME UP AND REVEAL YOUR LATEST NEFARIOUS PLOT.

IT IS LIKE KARAOKE OF EVIL, YES?

FIRST UP...

"DR. DEVIL...

RECENTLY I'VE BEEN STEALING BITS OF MACHINERY FROM WORK.

I'M GOING TO BUILD SOME KIND OF GUN, I THINK, AND CALL IT THE *DEVIL RAY.*

"CRIME BIKER...

I'VE MAPPED OUT A ROUTE WHERE I CAN RIDE BY PEDESTRIANS, STEAL PURSES, AND DISAPPEAR IN NO TIME!

"BLACK GHOST...

I'M GONNA HANG OUT AT MY EX-WIFE'S HOUSE AND SCARE THE SHIT OUT OF HER AND HER NEW ASSHOLE BOYFRIEND, DOUG.

"DIGITAL DEMON...

I'VE BEEN HACKING ADULT WEBSITES ON THE NET. CAN YOU IMAGINE? *PORN--FOR FREE!*

"CRIME WAVE...

SO, MOSTLY I'VE BEEN STEALING YACHTS. WELL...*YACHT.* JUST ONE. BUT I'M GOING TO USE IT TO BE, LIKE, THE MOST FEARED VILLAIN ON THE HIGH SEAS.

"THIEF OF HEARTS...

I'VE MANAGED TO BECOME "SPECIAL FRIENDS" WITH FOUR OLD MILLIONAIRES.

IT'S A LOT OF WORK, SURE, BUT ALL I NEED IS FOR *ONE* OF THEM TO PUT A RING ON IT. THEN I'LL BE SITTING LIKE ANNA NICOLE, YO.

"THE MUGGER...

NOTHIN' NEW, REALLY. I MEAN, I'M THE MUGGER. IT'S SELF-EXPLANATORY.

"DR. SPY...

I'VE COMPLETED MY X-RAY TELESCOPE! ONCE I FIND AN APARTMENT DIRECTLY IN LINE WITH THE GIRL'S DORM, DR. SPY SHALL BE *TRIUMPHANT!*

"DR. MORTAL."

...

PATHETIC.

UTTERLY PATHETIC.

THIS IS WHAT OUR PROUD TRADITION HAS BEEN REDUCED TO--WEEKEND WRONGDOERS?

HOBBY SCOUNDRELS?

REVEAL SOMETHING, MORTAL, OR SHUT THE FUCK UP!

YEAH! YOU NEVER HAVE A FUCKING THING TO REVEAL.

YOU'VE BECOME NO BETTER THAN COMMON, UNCOSTUMED CRIMINALS: SMALL-MINDED, SELFISH, BORING.

YOU'RE RIGHT. I HAVEN'T BEEN UP HERE IN A WHILE. BUT IT'S NOT BECAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN SCHEMING.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON A PLOT SO BIG AND COMPLEX THAT THE CRIME CABAL ITSELF WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD.

DR. DRACULA, IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND--?

THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW YOUR HISTORY REMEMBER THAT, SEVENTY YEARS AGO, THE CRIME CABAL DEVISED A MACHINE THAT WAS ABLE TO TRAP THE DEMONESS, FANTOMAH.

IT WAS RUMORED THAT THIS ***GODBOX*** COULD HARNESS HER INHUMAN POWERS AND BESTOW THEM UPON OTHERS. BUT THE BOX HAS BEEN LOST FOR SO LONG SOME BELIEVE IT NEVER EXISTED IT ALL.

BUT THE GODBOX EXISTS. I HAVE IT.

HERE WE GO.

WHAT ABOUT THE PUMPKIN KILLER? THE ASSASSIN WHO CANNOT DIE?

IF YOU HAVE THE BOX, THE BLACK LAMP WILL FIND YOU.

THE BLACK LAMP SOCIETY?

FEH. WE HAVE NO REASON TO FEAR THEM, THEIR AGENTS, OR ANYONE ELSE, FOR THAT MATTER.

BECAUSE, FOR A NOMINAL FEE, DR. DRACULA AND I CAN TURN YOU INTO THAT WHICH YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE: *TRUE* SUPERVILLAINS.

RULERS OF THE WORLD.

BUT A VILLAIN NEVER STEALS FROM ANOTHER VILLAIN.

I INTEND TO EARN YOUR MONEY, AND YOUR FAITH.

SO I'VE ARRANGED FOR A SMALL *LIVE* DEMONSTRATION.

TONIGHT ROCKS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I GOT SUPERPOWERS AND I'M GONNA FUCK YOU ON THE SAME NIGHT!

WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT ME FUCKING YOU?

BUT...I THOUGHT--

WHY'D YOU RUSH ME OUT OF THE ROOM, THEN?

BECAUSE, YOU ASS, YOUR FRIEND SAM WANTED VERY MUCH TO BE ALONE WITH DAISY.

WAIT. WHAT?

YOU HAVE NOT NOTICED? HE HAS LIKED DAISY FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

BUT, OF COURSE, SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN LOVE WITH RONNIE, SO SHE DID NOT SEE IT.

BUT, NOW THAT RONNIE HAS LYNN, AND SAM LOOKS VERY SEXY, HE HAS HIS CHANCE.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS STUFF?

BECAUSE I ACTUALLY PAY ATTENTION.

FAIR ENOUGH. BUT WHAT DOES THAT BIG SOAP OPERA HAVE TO DO WITH YOU FUCKING ME?

I CAN'T HAVE SEX WITH YOU, SILLY BOY. I ACTUALLY *LIKE* YOU.

WHAT? YOU DON'T LIKE ME. YOU HATE ME. I'M DIRT.

NOW LET'S GET NAKED!

HMM. I WONDER HOW STRONG WE REALLY ARE.

I DUNNO. STRONG ENOUGH. MAYBE A BLOWJOB, AT LEAST?

SUCH A ROMANTIC. NOW, LET US LIFT.

YEAH, TWO-FIFTY IS NO PROBLEM. EAT THAT, ARNIE.

I WILL PUT MORE ON.

HUNF. HOW MUCH IS THAT? THAT'S JUST ABOUT THE...HNF... LIMIT.

WESLEY, IT IS FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY POUNDS!

NOT EXACTLY *SUPER*-HUMAN, BUT ENOUGH TO K.O. SOME MAFIA DUDES--

WHAT THE--?!

SLSH

AIIEE!

GHHKK!

UHHNN.

AHHH!

WHUU... WHO THE FUCK...?

YES, MY FRIENDS, YOU ARE WITNESSING A GENUINE SUPERHUMAN BATTLE.

THE TEST SUBJECTS ARE TEEN LOSERS FOOLED INTO BELIEVING THEY ACCIDENTALLY FOUND AN ABANDONED SUPERSOLDIER LAB.

THE MORE SKILLED COMBATANT...

THAT'S OUR VERY OWN *PUMPKIN-HEADED ASSASSIN.*

AW N--

"AFTER ALL, WHY NOT CELEBRATE OUR NEWFOUND SUPERIORITY BY TAKING BACK FROM OUR ENEMIES...

"AND ELIMINATING SOME COSTUMED DO-GOODERS FOR TRADITION'S SAKE?"

THAT SLATTERNLY FANTOMAH MIMIC IS TOAST, SO ONLY TWO LITTLE TEEN SUPERHEROES REMAIN.

NOW, WHO AMONG YOU WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE SITE OF OUR REBIRTH?

SO IT DOESN'T HURT?

NAW. IT FEELS WEIRD, LIKE A JOLT OR LIKE AN ORGASM.

OH... HA.

DON'T BE AFRAID, DAISY. THE HEAP IS HERE TO PROTECT YOU.

SAM!

SHIT, I'M SORRY.

NO, IT'S FINE.

I JUST... THERE'S THE RONNIE THING AND...WELL... AH...

"MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST SEE WHERE WES AND LUZ WENT, OKAY?"

POR FAVOR...POR FAVOR...

LUZ...

YOU SHOULDN'T SPEAK. PROBABLY NICKED YOUR TONGUE, SO YOU SOUND EVEN DUMBER THAN USUAL.

OH NO... NO...

IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH MORE DANGEROUS A BLADE IS WHEN YOU'RE STRONGER THAN ANYONE ON THE PLANET. WENT THROUGH YOUR FACE LIKE IT WAS AIR.

IT WORKED PRETTY WELL ON BLACK FURY YESTERDAY, TOO. THAT'S ROB CARPENTER, FOR YOU NON-VILLAIN TYPES.

ROB, WES--?

AND NIGHTMARE, TOO. ALL DEAD "SIDEKICKS."

WHY? *WHY?!*

BECAUSE...

I'M THE BAD GUY.

LYNN!

SPLUTCH

THE ARCTIC LAIR.

I'M SORRY, ALAN. I THINK IT'S TOO LATE.

THE ASSHOLE SAID THERE WERE ONLY A COUPLE LEFT.

GOD. SHOULD WE JUST CALL THE POLICE?

NO. NO POLICE.

VLAD AND I WILL GET THE SURVIVORS OUT ALIVE.

AND THEN I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE DR. MORTAL AND HIS LITTLE CRIME CABAL DIE UGLY.

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

WE'RE CALLING IT KIND OF EARLY TONIGHT, HUH?

YEAH. AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO DESTROY YOU AGAIN IN BILLIARDS, I REALLY SHOULD SPEND MORE TIME WITH LISA.

SHE'S RAZZING YOU ALREADY? SHE HASN'T EVEN *HAD* THE BABY YET.

NO. IT'S NOT THAT. JUST--WELL, I THINK SHE THINKS THAT I SPEND A SUSPICIOUS AMOUNT OF TIME WITH YOU. Y'KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

KRRRSH

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

CHRIS! SOMEONE'S LEAVING THROUGH YOUR WINDOW!

SHIT! LISA!!

LISA! YOU OKAY, BABY?

TO BE CONTINUED!

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

"HEY, DAISY. IS STUFF GONNA BE WEIRD BETWEEN US NOW?"

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SAM?

I DUNNO. JUST... YOU KNOW, I WANTED YOU AND, WELL...

NOT ONLY ARE WE FRIENDS, WE'RE ***SUPERHERO TEAMMATES*** NOW.

SO, UH, ANY KIND OF WEIRDNESS BETWEEN US COULD BE EXPLOITED BY OUR ARCHENEMIES AND STUFF.

HOW ABOUT WE FOCUS ON FINDING ***LUZ*** AND ***WES?***

C'MON, YOU REALLY THINK THEY'RE LOST?

THEY'RE YOUNG, SUPER-POWERED, AND WEARING TIGHT OUTFITS...

THEY'RE SAFE SOMEWHERE, RIPPIN' OFF EACH OTHER'S SPANDEX.

FLAMINGO...

YES, HEAP?

I... I FOUND WES AND LUZ.

LUZ! ARE YOU GUYS OKAY?

DAISY, WAIT.

IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE? CUZ IT'S NOT FU--

OH.

THEY'RE DEAD. THEY'RE--!

DAISY!

MOVE!

UNGHF!

YOU OKAY?

AW, NO! SHIT. I'M SORRY...

WHAT'S WRONG, SAM? DON'T KNOW YOUR OWN STRENGTH?

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR THAT. SEE...

I KNOW MINE REALLY WELL.

DR. MORTAL'S "BADDIE" BUS...

THE MAGICAL MISERY TOUR.

ON THE ROAD FROM NUTLEY, NEW JERSEY.

SHEEZ. I CAN'T BELIEVE I AGREED TO THIS.

I MEAN, YOU EVER HEAR WHAT *FANTOMAH* COULD DO?

APPARENTLY SHE ONCE TURNED A GUY INTO A NEANDERTHAL, THEN FED HIM TO A PRIDE OF LIONS.

AND THAT DOESN'T SCARE YOU?

HONEY, I'M ALL ABOUT IT.

WE HAVE ARRIVED. THE SOURCE OF GODLIKE POWER LOOMS CLOSE!

BUT FIRST, I'D LIKE TO ADD A LITTLE TWIST TO THE PLOT.

AFTER ALL, *TREACHERY* AND *BETRAYAL* ARE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF A TRUE VILLAIN'S ORIGIN...

"WE HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY FUCKED OVER BY ONE OF OUR OWN--A DISTINGUISHED MEMBER WHO STRAYED FROM THE PATH OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS AND FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH HER OWN ARCHENEMY...

"WE ARE DEALING WITH HER APPROPRIATELY. YOU SEE, THE TRAITOR HAS FRIENDS, FAMILY, A LOVING HUSBAND...

"THOSE GIVE HER SOMETHING A VILLAIN SHOULD NEVER POSSESS...

"A WEAKNESS. WEAKNESSES ARE FOR THE HEROES."

THE TRAITOR SOUGHT TO TRICK US, BUT A MIND AS REFINED AND DEVIOUS AS MY OWN CANNOT BE FOOLED.

ON THE CONTRARY, I'VE TURNED HER SCHEME INTO A TREAT FOR YOU ALL.

I WILL AWARD ONE FREE TREATMENT IN THE *GODBOX*...

TO WHOEVER KILLS THE *IMPOSTERS* IN OUR MIDST.

DEATH TO *SISTER SACRILEGE* AND *ALTAR BOY!*

EMINENCE, INDIANA.

DID YOU GET A GOOD LOOK AT HIM?

C'MON, SHE WAS JUST ATTACKED! CAN WE SAVE THIS FOR LATER?

NO, NO. IT'S OKAY. I'M FINE.

HE WAS MEDIUM BUILD... STOCKY. I DIDN'T SEE HIS FACE. HE HAD A SOUTHERN ACCENT, I THINK.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE TOOK? WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR?

"NO IDEA. I WALKED IN ON HIM IN THE KITCHEN. HE HIT ME IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD. THEN ONE OF THE DOGS CHASED HIM OUT."

Loyal Pooch will find you, human-who-has-hurt-Pooch's-mistress.

I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AROUND.

LET ME KNOW IF YOU THINK OF ANYTHING THAT'S MISSING.

SURE. THANKS, MAGGIE.

CHRIS, CAN I TALK TO YOU A SECOND?

I AM SO SORRY. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE. I SHOULDN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE. OUR BABY--

PLEASE SHUT UP.

I DIDN'T RUN INTO THE GUY IN THE KITCHEN.

I WALKED IN ON HIM IN THE BASEMENT.

THE OFFICE...

RIGHT. THIS WASN'T A RANDOM BREAK-IN.

THIS GUY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR.

HE WENT STRAIGHT TO THE OFFICE...

"AND HE COPIED ALL THE *HACK/SLASH, INC.* FILES."

Whiiinnne.

KRAAAK

THE SOUND IT MAKES WHEN YOU'VE GOT SUPER-STRENGTH AND YOU PUNCH ANOTHER SUPERHUMAN--

GOD, DON'T YOU JUST LOVE IT?

=SNIFF=

W-WHO ARE YOU?

JESUS. ALWAYS THE SAME QUESTION. I DIDN'T REALIZE THE DOWNSIDE OF WEARING A MASK. IT'S ANNOYING.

DAISY!

RUN!!

FATHOOM

GHYAGH!

KRAAK

HUNNGH!

SWAK

YEAH, THAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SUPER-STRENGTH.

NO MATTER HOW STRONG YOUR MUSCLES ARE, YOUR HANDS ARE STILL MEAT AND BONE.

WHIFFING WITH A PUNCH IS LIKE THROWING YOUR FIST AT A BRICK WALL AT FIFTY MILES AN HOUR.

MESSY.

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I HAD THE SAME RESTRICTION?

YOU GOT YOUR STRENGTH FROM THE GODBOX, YEAH?

WELL, WE'RE EVEN THEN. WE CAN DO THIS ALL DAY.

SAM, YOU FUCKING IDIOT.

WE SET THE GODBOX SO THAT "THE ALTERNATIVES" COULD ONLY ACCESS ONE SUPERPOWER.

OUTSIDE.

WHKRAK

EEEEIGH!

LET'S SEE HOW THOSE OLD MEN LIKE YOU WITH NO NOSE, BITCH.

WE MUST SAVE THE TEENS.

RUN TO THE BUILDING. WE WILL SPLIT UP THERE.

ONE OF US DRAWS THESE GEEKS, THE OTHER FINDS THE KIDS.

DEAL.

AND IF WE DON'T MAKE IT?

IT HAS BEEN GOOD BEING YOUR SIDEKICK.

GO ON, YOU COWARDS! GET SOME BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS!

BEEP BEEP

REPORT!

ANOTHER ONE DOWN. ZAPPY HANDS ROCK.

BIO-ELECTRIC MANIPULATION, MY DEAR PUMPKIN KILLER.

YOU MAY HAVE TWO UNWELCOME VISITORS SHORTLY. THE "VILLAINS" I BUSSED IN ARE PRACTICALLY USELESS.

DON'T WORRY. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT...

DADDY.

STUPID, STUPID FUCKING IDEA.

ANGGGGH.

STUPID...

GYM

THE STOREROOM? RONNIE AND LYNN WERE GOING TO--

MAYBE THEY'RE STILL--

RONNIE...?

STORAGE

RAGE

OH GOD. RONNIE.

OH NO. NOT YOU, TOO!

WHY?

WHY ARE THEY DOING THIS TO US?

STORAGE

BECAUSE WE CAN. BECAUSE *I* CAN...

SO YOU'RE IT FOR THE *ALTERNATIVES.*

THE LAST HERO STANDING.

I'LL ADMIT, I PRETTY MUCH FIGURED YOU'D DIE FIRST.

THE *FEARLESS FLAMINGO.*

HA HA. YOU KNOW RONNIE PICKED THAT NAME FOR YOU BECAUSE IT'S IRONIC, RIGHT? YOU? FEARLESS?

OH NO NO NO.

YOU'RE AFRAID OF EVERYTHING. CHRIST, YOU WERE TOO AFRAID TO EVEN USE THE GODBOX.

AND NOW HERE YOU ARE, POWERLESS, IN FRONT OF *ME,* THE STRONGEST FUCKING WOMAN ON THE PLANET.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE SADDEST PART.

THE MOST PATHETIC THING IS THAT YOU WERE TOO CHICKENSHIT TO TELL RONNIE YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH HIM.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, YOU LEFT HIM WIDE OPEN TO BE PLAYED LIKE A LITTLE BITCH BY THE NEW GIRL, WHO ALSO HAPPENED TO BE A SINISTER SUPERVILLAINESS--

KRAK

EEEEE!

YOU ARE *DEFINITELY* NOT SAMHAIN.

KRAK

AGGHGH!!

C'MON. SHOW ME SOME BLOOD!

I WANNA SEE YOUR--

BOOM

OW. FUCKING BITCH. YOU GOT LUCKY.

APPARENTLY THE GODBOX DOESN'T THINK INVULNERABILITY SHOULD COVER EYEBALLS.

YOU MUST BE *ALAN KNIGHT'S* LITTLE SPY.

I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A SECOND, DAISY. I'M GONNA CUT THIS BITCH INTO SPAGHETTI.

JUST BECAUSE WE CLOSED UP FOR THE NIGHT DOESN'T MEAN THIS PLACE CAN'T SEE SOME ACTION.

DR. MORTAL TENDS TO FROWN ON THIS KIND OF THING, BUT I FIGURE IT'S ONLY FAIR SINCE HE GETS TO BE AT THE LAB.

BASTARDO.

NOW, NOW. IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK TO A LOYAL CUSTOMER? JUST CONSIDER THIS AN EXTRA SESSION, ON THE HOUSE.

STAY PUT. I'M GOING TO GRAB MY CAMERA...

YOU ARE IN FOR A HELL OF A SHOW, HUBBY!

KUHNK

ALAN, IS THAT YOU?!

YEAH, IT'S ME.

ALL THESE YEARS WORRYING IF I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN ON THE LEGACY...

AND I LET A KID DO MY JOB.

DON'T WORRY. CASSIE AND VLAD WILL MAKE THINGS RIGHT.

HE WENT THIS WAY!

HURR. HURR. HURR.

WHERE TO GO NOW?

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, DAISY. WAIT YOUR TURN.

whap

YOU... YOU KILLED MY FRIENDS, LYNN.

YOU KILLED THE NICEST BOY I'VE EVER MET.

I THOUGHT *YOU* WERE MY FRIEND.

ALL JUST SET UP. I DO WHAT MY DADDY TELLS ME TO DO. WHY NOT? HE LOVES ME SO MUCH HE MADE ME INTO A ***GODDESS***. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND FAMILY.

YOU'VE BEEN AN ORPHAN FOR WHAT...TEN YEARS?

EVEN THE RETARDED KIDS GET ADOPTED AFTER THAT LONG.

MY FRIENDS ***WERE*** MY FAMILY-- EVEN BETTER, BECAUSE WE WERE ALL GONNA BE HEROES TOGETHER!

UGK!

YEAH, WELL, NOW YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER MASKED DOPE THAT NO ONE CARED ABOUT UNTIL YOU WERE DEAD.

AND NOW DR. MORTAL AND HIS DEADLY DAUGHTER CAN GO ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF TAKING OVER THE WORLD, JUST AS OUR FOREFATHERS INTENDED.

SHUNK

WHO NEEDS KRYPTONITE, ASSHOLE?

GRRAH!

ENOUGH! IT'S CLEAR NONE OF YOU WILL WIN THIS CONTEST, AND TIME GROWS SHORT.

SHIT, MORTAL, GET THIS BIG--

WAIT A MINUTE.

IS THAT THE GODBOX?

THE GODBOX!

DO *NOT* TOUCH THAT!!

BLAM

chak

OH CRAP...

THE BOX IS IMPORTANT TO YOU.

ESPECIALLY THIS PART.

GOOD.

FRAK

HURR. MAYBE NOT GOOD.

FWAEH

FANTOMAH IS FREE ONCE AGAIN.

NO LONGER SHALL MEN STEAL MY POWERS FOR THEIR OWN.

WHO AMONG YOU HAS EVIL IN HIS HEART?

SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ALL THAT.

FANTOMAH...

WE-- WE'RE HERE TO *HELP* YOU.

WE'RE THE *GOOD GUYS*...

FANTOMAH KNOWS THE FIENDS FROM THE RIGHTEOUS.

MY RAGE HAS BEEN IMPRISONED FOR TOO LONG.

EVIL MEN REMOVED ME FROM MY HOME AND PREVENTED ME FROM PROTECTING THE JUNGLE.

YEEAARGGH!

NOW ALL THOSE WHO KNOW EVIL SHALL FEEL MY WRATH.

WHAT HAVE I SET FREE?

GOD SAVE ME. PLEASE.

YOU. YOU ORCHESTRATED THIS. YOU REVERE THE EVIL MEN WHO IMPRISONED ME.

YOUR MASK MEANS NOTHING TO FANTOMAH. TO ME, YOUR SIN IS YOUR TRUE FACE. TO ME, ALL YOUR PLOTS ARE REVEALED.

YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF BETTER THAN THOSE AROUND YOU.

I *AM* BETTER. NO ONE LISTENS TO KURT LOMBARDI. BUT THEY'LL LISTEN TO DR. MORTAL.

AND MY DAUGHTER WILL GET A CHANCE TO BE SOMEONE.

YOUR CHILD IS NO MORE.

LYNN? NO...

FOR ALL YOUR TALK, YOU HAVE A WEAKNESS, TOO.

A DAUGHTER YOU LOVE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE REST OF HUMANITY.

YOU WILL BE REUNITED WITH HER IN HELL.

SO SAYS FANTOMAH, MYSTERY WOMAN OF THE JUNGLE.

VLAD!!

CASSANDRA?

WHO ELSE DARES FACE *FANTOMAH?*

VLAD! THE VILLAINS?

URR... GONE.

GOOD. THIS CHICK IS GONNA BE DEAD QUICK UNLESS WE GET SOME HELP.

THE VILLAINS ARE... DEAD.

FANTOMAH...

FANTOMAH? IS SHE THE BITCH GODDESS EVERYONE SAYS SHE IS?

SHE... URRR...

I AM FANTOMAH.

WAIT. SHE--

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN DO ALL THE SHIT PEOPLE SAY YOU CAN, LADY...

BUT I'VE GOT A DYING KID WHO COULD USE A MIRACLE RIGHT NOW.

WHO ARE YOU TO ASK A FAVOR OF ONE SUCH AS FANTOMAH?

LOOK HERE, FAY WRAY. IF IT WASN'T FOR US, YOU'D STILL BE ***POWERADE*** TO A BUNCH OF ***UNDERWEAR-PIRATES***, SO IF YOU CAN HELP THIS KID, YOU'D BETTER FUCKING DO IT.

CASSANDRA...

THERE IS GREAT DARKNESS IN YOUR SOUL, CASANDRA HACK. PERHAPS EVEN EVIL...

BUT YOUR HATE REMAINS DELICATELY BALANCED BY YOUR DESIRE TO PROTECT THE WEAK AND INNOCENT.

=KOFF= =KOFF= WHUUU?

IT IS A CONFLICT FANTOMAH UNDERSTANDS.

COOL. UM... THANKS?

SHIT. IT'S FANTOMAH!

AND THE SKANK THAT TOOK MY FUCKING NOSE. KILL HER!

BEGONE.

I SHALL RETURN TO MY JUNGLE...

OH FUCK ME.

THIS IS THE WOMAN YOU BOSSED AROUND.

WHERE MY RAGE WILL BE CHANNELED INTO ITS DEFENSE.

JEEZ. WAIT UNTIL SHE SEES WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO THE RAIN FOREST.

I MAY NEVER SLEEP AGAIN.

WE JUST WANTED TO BE SOMETHING GREAT.

SHE IS THE ONLY ONE TO SURVIVE?

YEAH...

THE REAL WORLD IS NO PLACE FOR TEEN SUPERHEROES.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

ELF & SAM

CASSIE. WE JUST GOT YOUR MESSAGES. VENUS SAID YOUR CALLS WERE URGENT.

NO. IT'S NOTHING.

I'M...I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE STILL A GOOD GUY.

AND, PLEASE, CALL ME AVA.

EVERYTHING'S OKAY?

YES. I THINK SO, VENUS.

GOOD.

LATER.

ST. JOSEPH'S REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER.

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY.

SHE ALL RIGHT?

S/. IT SEEMS ALL THE DAMAGE IS FIXED. AT LEAST THE DAMAGE WE CAN SEE.

CASSIE, FORGIVE ME. I SENT YOU INTO DANGER AS A SACRIFICE, ALL THE WHILE HOPING THAT ALAN--

HEY, STOP. YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO. FAMILY COMES FIRST.

YEAH, WELL, ANJELICA AND I WERE TALKING, AND--

WE THINK YOU SHOULD STAY HERE. VLAD, TOO. YOU WON'T NEED TO RUN ANY MORE. ALAN, MY HUSBAND, AND I--WE WILL BE ***YOUR*** FAMILY.

"I...

"LOOK, THERE'S A FORMER SUPER-SIDEKICK IN THAT ROOM WHO NEEDS AN OFFER LIKE THAT RIGHT ABOUT NOW. SHE DID ALL THIS SO SHE COULD BE A PART OF SOMETHING GOOD."

I'D HELP HER OUT, MAYBE EVEN STICK AROUND.

BUT I'VE ALREADY GOT A SIDEKICK-- AND PLACES TO BE.

FANTOMAH HAS HER JUNGLE. I HAVE MINE.

THE END.

HACKOWEEN

HALLOWEEN MAN

HACK/SLASH

COVER by DAVID BALDEON, SCOTT D.M SIMMONS & MARC LEWIS

The Spectacular Story of Solomon Hitch!

Halloween Man created by Drew Edwards

Slain by a vampire but brought back to life by arcane magic, Solomon Hitch is **Halloween Man**, a flesh-eating zombie with the power of the horror movie sequel. Now, with the help of his glamorous super-scientist girlfriend Lucy, reprobate necromancer Morlack, and hedonistic demi-god Man-Goat, he defends Solar City, Texas from evil.

The Strange Tale of Cassie Hack!

Hack/Slash created by Tim Seeley

Cassie Hack is the lone survivor of an attack by a slasher called the Lunch Lady... a slasher who happens to be her mother! Now, she travels the world with her monstrous partner Vlad, hunting down and destroying slashers wherever she finds them!

HACK/SLASH vs. HALLOWEEN MAN

Written by **Drew Edwards**
Pencilled by **David Baldeón**
Inked by **Scott D.M. Simmons**
Colors by **Marc Lewis**
Art Direction and Letters by **Brian J. Crowley**
Edited by **Russell Hillman**
Special thanks to **Tim Seeley** for making this all possible

Chapter 1: A tale of two realities.

Outskirts of San Antonio.

I TOLD YOU THERE'D REALLY BE A DONKEY LADY.

HURR... "HEE-HAA". I WANT HER TEETH.

HEE-HAAAA!

EMRF!

YOU CAN BE SO FUCKING WEIRD, VLAD.

HURR... DONKEY TEETH. GOOD LUCK.

HEE-HAAAA!

HEA?!

HAAAA?!

JESUS, WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

WE HAVE COMPETITION?

LOOKS LIKE IT.

I THINK THIS AXE BELONGS TO YOU?

THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH, SKANK. STEP ANY CLOSER AND YOU'LL BE EATING DIXIE FRIED LEAD FOR BREAKFAST.

I AM SORRY TO ALARM YOU, ***CASSIE HACK,*** BUT I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY.

I COME TO YOU SEEKING AID IN DESTROYING A TERRIBLE EVIL. I HAVE TRAVELED ALL THE WAY FROM AN ALTERNATE EARTH. I AM THE ***BRAINCHILD.***

KEEP TALKING...

Solar City, Texas. Another Earth.

BIT ME... WHY...?

JUST RELAX AND LET THE ANTI-VENOM DO ITS WORK. AN AMBULANCE SHOULD BE FLYING IN SHORTLY.

I WANT TO EAT HIS LITTLE GIRLFRIEND! SHE LOOKS NICE AND FLESHY!

CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS GUY?! I THINK HE'S JUST TRYING TO KEEP ALL THE MEAT FOR HIMSELF!

CREEP SMACK PUNY PUMPKIN MAN! CREEP WANT MEAT!

MRMF!

ONLY IF I GET THE REST OF THAT BIG LUMP OF MEAT SHE'S TENDING TO, BUD.

YOU HEAR THAT MISTER!? BEFORE WE WERE TURNED, WE WERE OUR WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL BAND OF HEROES. YOU'RE SIMPLY OUTGUNNED!

THAT A FACT, TIN-GRIN?

C'MON MAN, YOU'RE ONE OF US ALREADY! WHY THE HELL ARE YOU PROTECTING THEM?!?

LORD KNOWS SOMEONE HAS TO, BOYS. IT MIGHT AS WELL BE ME.

YOU HEARD THE MAN... REVENGERS RUMBLE!!!

CREEP CRUSH!

YEAH, LET'S MESS UP THIS JIVE TURKEY LIKE IT'S THANKSGIVING.

WE'VE BEEN TO ANOTHER WORLD BEFORE WHEN WE WENT TO NEF...

...BUT I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE ALL OF THIS. *ALTERNATE REALITIES IN CRISIS.*

JUST LIKE IN THE COMIC BOOKS.

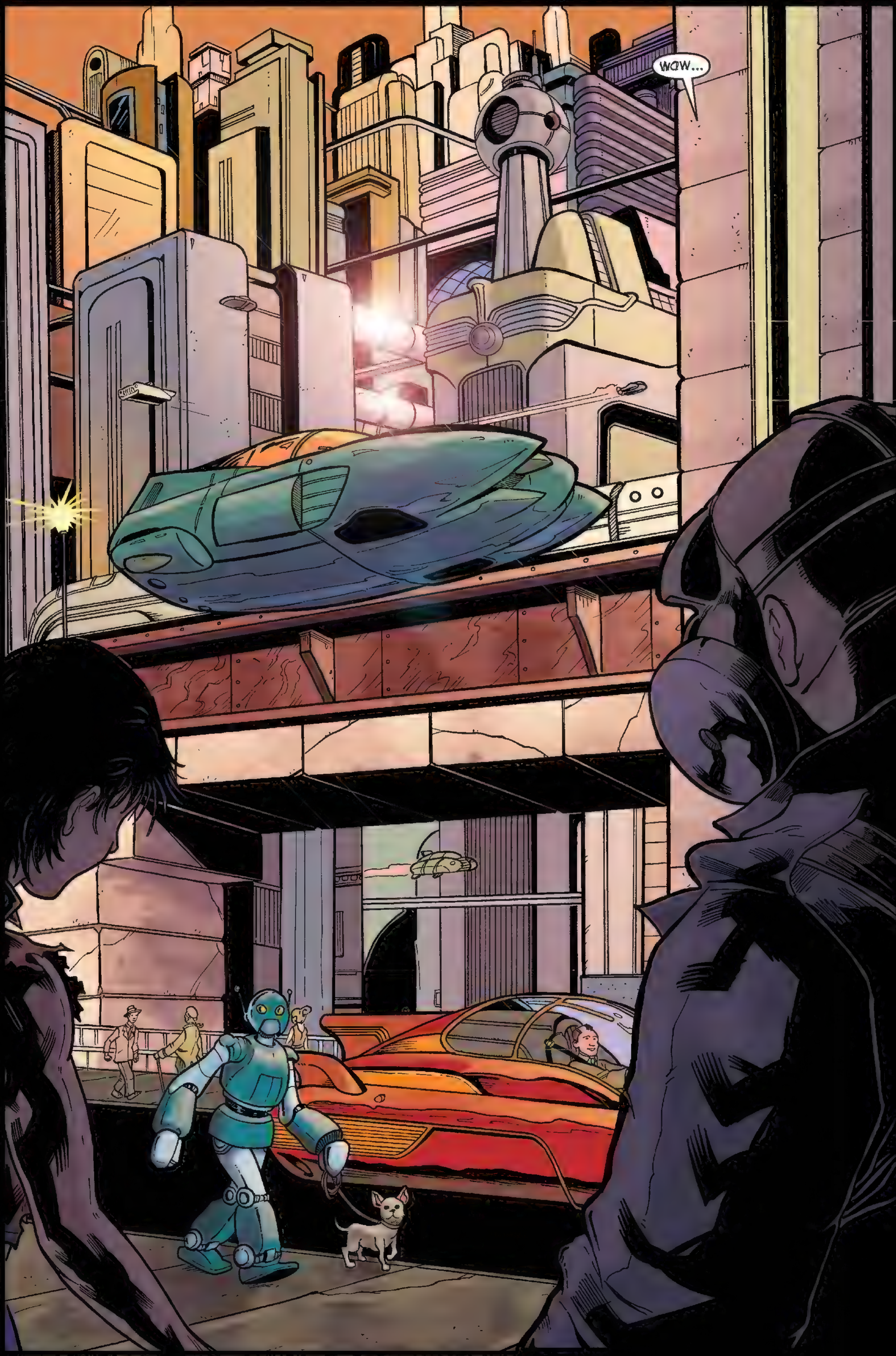
BELIEVE IT HEROES! THIS CITY NEEDS YOUR HELP MOST OF ALL.

GO! KILL THE ONE THEY CALL "HALLOWEEN MAN!"

IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE WHERE IT'S BEST NOT TO QUESTION THINGS TOO MUCH.

LET'S GET A MOVE ON.

SWEET ZOMBIE JESUS!


WOW...

White Rock Lake, Solar City.

HRM...

THIS AIN'T GOOD.

NOT GOOD AT ALL.

THE ELDER...

BLAMF

Across town.

THIS WORLD IS *INSANE.* I MEAN, GET THIS...

ROB ZOMBIE PLAYS BIG BAND MUSIC!

TWIST & SHOUT

ROB ZOMBIE'S BIG BAND EXPERIENCE

HURR... YES. VERY FUNNY. BUT WHY MAGAZINE?

I JUST THOUGHT WE SHOULD GET FAMILIAR WITH THE SURROUNDINGS. I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO FIND THIS SUPER-SLASHER.

HRMMMM... YES. VERY ELUSIVE.

CRAP, IT'S *HALLOWEEN MAN!* I'M OUTTA HERE!

WELL I'LL BE DAMNED.

GREAT... NOW WHAT? GOOD GUYS OR BAD GUYS?

KISS IT "FRIGHTENSTEIN!"

BAD GUYS EH?

NIGHTY-NIGHT THEN!

CASSIE!

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'VE GOT STUFF TO DO!

NICE MASK...

RRRRRR!

Back across town.

WE NEED TO TALK, *LUCY.*

NOT NOW, *MORLACK.*

LOOK, YOU MIGHT HAVE SOLOMON FOOLED WITH YOUR OLD SAGE ACT. BUT IT DOESN'T JIVE WELL WITH ME, UNDERSTAND?

I KNOW ABOUT THE SUPER-POWERED ZOMBIES SOLOMON IS FIGHTING, BUT THIS IS MUCH BIGGER THAN THEM.

HOW MUCH BIGGER?

LIKE "END OF THE WORLD" BIG.

ALL OF THE FISH IN WHITE ROCK LAKE HAVE GONE "ISLAND OF LOST SOULS." THIS IS A BAD SIGN.

OKAY, BUT THIS HAD BETTER NOT BE SOME OF YOUR TYPICAL NONSENSE.

NONSENSE? MAYBE. TYPICAL? NOT A CHANCE, SWEETIE PIE.

CREEP HUNGRIEST THERE IS!

COME AND GET ME, BIG FELLA!

WELL, THAT WAS HUMBLING.

HURR...

CREEP SMASH!

SOLOMON SHOVE!

OKAY, CLEARLY THIS GUY IS A LOT TOUGHER THAN OUR NORMAL MARK.

YES.

WE'LL NEED SOMETHING TO EVEN THE ODDS.

SO, WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

ROBOT, YES?

IT SMELLS RANK! I DON'T THINK IT'S JUST A MACHINE.

GET AWAY FROM MY ARMOR YOU LITTLE BRAT! I'LL BITE YOUR FINGERS OFF!

WHOA! A ZOMBIFIED SUPERHERO IN POWER ARMOR! ARE YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?

I THINK YES.

I'LL EAT YOUR GUTS! EAT YOUR LUNGS!

NO, TINKER TOY...

...YOU'LL EAT THIS!

BLAM BLAM BLAM

TECHNOCRAT! GET AWAY FROM HIM! RRRRRRR!

ANOTHER ONE! GO FOR HIS BRAIN, VLAD!

HEH. TOUGH LUCK, PAL. MY SKELETON IS LACED WITH PURE OBERON...

OH...

NOW I'M GOING TO CHOMP DOWN ON YOUR FREAKY GIRLFRIEND HERE.

SHIELD'S BAR AND GRILL

TRY IT, FUZZBALL!

OH I INTEND TO.

NO...

...YOU WILL NOT!

YOU CAN KEEP THE MAGIC SHOVEL. I CALL DIBS ON THE ROBOT JOCK.

STILL HUNGRY? HOW ABOUT MY SIZE 11'S?

I DON'T HOW WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THIS GUY. HE'S HOLDING HIS OWN AGAINST THE UNSTOPPABLE CREEP!

DAY I CAN'T TAKE SOME CRACKER FROM SOME BACKWATER DIMENSION IS THE DAY I GIVE UP THIS CRAZY GAME.

CREEP HUNGRY! CREEP EAT PUMPKIN MAN'S FACE!

I GOT NEWS FOR YA' TINY...

KABLAM

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE!

SPLORCH

THAT CLEAR TO YOU OTHER TWO BOZOS?

DID YOU JUST SEE THAT?

YEAH...

GET HIS ASS!

WITH PLEASURE!

LOOKS LIKE SOLOMON HAS ALREADY BEEN HERE.

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, WE NEED TO STOP THIS FIGHT - AND QUICKLY.

HMMMM...

GOT YOURSELF AN IDEA?

A BACK-UP PLAN YES, I CAN USE THESE.

USE WHAT?

THE REMAINS OF THOSE SUPER-ZOMBIES. BUT LET'S FIND SOLOMON.

Downtown!

IT'S A HOMER!!

AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

LOOK OUT! HERE COMES ARACHNODUDE!

OOFFF!

FIRST I'M GOING TO EAT YOU, AND THEN... I'M GOING TO INFECT THIS ENTIRE PLANET.

THAT A FACT?

UH-OH...

SPANK

I REMEMBER YOU FROM EARLIER. THANKS A LOT PAL. NO HARD FEELINGS, OKAY?

SHAK

NO.

THAT IS ALL OF THEM, YES?

NO! NOT ALL OF THEM.

I SHRUNK DOWN TILL THE HARD STUFF WAS TAKEN CARE OF.

NOW I'M GOING TO LICK THE MARROW FROM YOUR MALFORMED BONES, LITTLE MAN.

KRUNCH

WHOA!

HOW THE HELL DO YOU LAND THIS THING?

I GUESS IT'S ALL OVER NOW, HUH?

LIL' LADY, YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT.

PERFECT, MY LOVE... PERFECT...

MAGIC SHOVEL DIDN'T WORK, VLAD. NOW IT'S MY TURN.

SOLOMON, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE... STOP!

KEEP 'EM BUSY, VLAD. THIS WON'T TAKE A SECOND!

DIE!

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, GOT THE T-SHIRT!

SCCCRREEEEEEEEEEEEE

TO BE CONCLUDED...

Hours ago. White Rock Lake.

MAGIC IS OFTEN BASED AROUND CONCEPTS. TOTEMS IF YOU WILL.

WHAT'S THIS HAVE TO DO WITH THE LAKE AND ZOMBIES?

THOSE SUPER-ZOMBIES REPRESENT AN ARCHETYPE. SOMETHING SIMILAR TO SOLOMON. TO BATTLE HIM AND BUILD UP HATEFUL ENERGY.

AND THEY WERE SUMMONED TO OUR WORLD TO RELEASE WHAT'S TRAPPED IN THAT LAKE.

AND THAT IS?

EVER CATCH MUCH HENTAI, LUCY?

HENTAI?

SOLARCITYNEWS

Now.

THE CREATURE IS SLOW MOVING, BUT CAUSES MASSIVE DESTRUCTION IN ITS WAKE.

SOLARCITYNEWS

POISON FROM THE MONSTER'S TENTACLES APPEARS TO HAVE A HORRIBLE MUTATIVE EFFECT. SOLAR-CITIZENS ARE CAUTIONED TO AVOID CONTACT WITH THE CREATURE.

SOLARCITYNEWS

SOURCES FROM THE "SENTINELS OF JUSTICE" HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT THE MONSTER CRISIS.

WE HAVE OUR HANDS FULL OVERSEAS WITH MANGA MASTER. WE'LL BE HOME AS SOON AS WE CAN. JUST KEEP SAFE FOR THE TIME BEING.

SCN

Mr. Maximum

Sentinels of Justice, Chairperson

SOLARCITYNEWS

WHICH LEADS US TO OUR LAST, MOST DIRE QUESTION - WHERE IS SOLAR CITY'S MOST FEARSOME DEFENDER AGAINST THE SUPERNATURAL WHEN SHE NEEDS HIM MOST?

WHERE IS HALLOWEEN MAN?

SOLLY STOP!!!

NOW WE'RE GONNA SEE WHAT THIS BABY CAN REALLY DO!

YRGH!

HA! FRY YOU BASTARD!

MESS WITH THE BEST, DIE LIKE THE REST.

REMAIN HERE.

NO YOU HAVE TO STOP THEM!

LADY, I'M GONNA...

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING EXCEPT DIE, FUCKFACE.

OK. HE'S... AND SHE'S... YEAH. MAKES SENSE.

MONSTER BE DEAD SOON.

HURR... LOVE?

HE MIGHT BE A MONSTER BUT I *LOVE* HIM.

I DON'T CARE HOW TOUGH YOU ARE. I'M GOING TO STOP YOU!

KRAK

JUST LIKE I BEAT THEM ALL!

KRAK

JUST LIKE I STOPPED MY MOTHER!

KRAK

CASSANDRA... PLEASE...

WE HAVE BEEN TRICKED.

HE'S *NOT* THE BAD GUY, IS HE?

OH... GOD...

NO... I AM!

AND NOW THAT MY BELOVED HUSBAND IS AT FULL STRENGTH THERE WILL BE NO STOPPING US. THANKS FOR ALL OF THOSE LOVELY, HATEFUL FEELINGS.

AND NOW THAT YOU'VE OUTLIVED YOUR USEFULNESS...

RORFGH!

KRUNCH

OH, DEAR ME...

PTUI!

MISS ANYTHING?

LET ME SEE IF I GOT THIS RIGHT? HOW'S IT GO? OH YES.

A SLASHER CAME TO TOWN AND SLAUGHTERED ALL OF THE TEENS. BUT ONE GIRL... DIFFERENT THAN THE REST... LIVED.

"THING THAT SHOULD NOT BE" ...MEET "THE FINAL GIRL".

YOU KNOW ABOUT ME? HOW?

I GET AROUND, SWEET CHEEKS. I KNOW LOTS OF THINGS.

SUCH AS HOW YOU TWO FIGHTING BROUGHT ENOUGH ARCHETYPICAL ENERGY TO GIVE THE ELDER A REAL NICE BUZZ. I'M SURE SLAUGHTERING THOSE SUPER-ZOMBIES DIDN'T HURT THINGS EITHER.

NOW LET'S GET A MOVE ON; WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A LOVECRAFTIAN GOD TO KILL.

SOME CULTURES IMPRISON THEIR GODS ONCE THEY HAVE NO MORE USE FOR THEM.

THEY'LL USE LESS-EVOLVED DIMENSIONS AS PRISONS. THIS WAS THE CASE WITH THE "ELDER."

GENERATIONS AGO HE WAS TRANSFORMED INTO WATER AND WAS FORCED TO BECOME PART OF WHITE ROCK LAKE. HE'S BEEN RELEASED.

AND OUR COURSE IS CLEAR.

IT'LL BE TOUGH, BUT I THINK I'VE DEVISED A WAY TO KILL HIM. I'VE HAD MY DROIDS BUILDING THE SHELL WHILE I GATHERED UP PIECES FROM THOSE ZOMBIES.

WITH THEIR ECTOPLASMIC CHARGE, IT COULD BE ENOUGH TO BLOW HIM UP. I CALL IT THE ECTO-BOMB.

I THINK I GET WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO.

POP THIS SUCKER ON MY BACK. JUMP IN SIDE THE BEASTIE'S MOUTH AND *BOOM!*

THIS REALLY IS JUST LIKE COMIC BOOK.

YEAH EXCEPT THIS ISN'T A COMIC BOOK. THIS IS REAL LIFE.

I'M GOING WITH YOU.

NO WAY, SISTER-- I ONLY LET A SELECT FEW PEOPLE WATCH MY BACK. BESIDES, LUCY NEEDS TO WORK ON A WAY TO GET YOU HOME.

NO OFFENSE BECAUSE SHE SEEMS WICKED SMART, BUT THAT SHOULD TAKE HER AWHILE.

SO WATCH HER WORK, YA MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING.

I DON'T NEED ANY SCIENCE LESSONS FROM MARILYN VON MONROESTEIN. THIS THING BEING LOOSE IS BOTH OF OUR FAULTS.

YOU REALLY THINK I WANT TO DO THIS? I'M DOING IT BECAUSE IT'S THE RIGHT THING.

=SIGH=

Later.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU TALKED ME INTO THIS.

IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, I'M SCARED SHITLESS.

I'VE KILLED MY FAIR SHARE OF SLASHERS, SURE. BUT JUMPING OUT OF AN OLD BOMBER INTO A GIANT MONSTER'S MOUTH? THAT'S A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME.

SO, THIS IS LIKE A NORMAL DAY FOR YOU HUH?

YOU KIDDING? ELDER GODS, GOTH GIRLS FROM ALTERNATE EARTHS, AND ECTOPLASM BOMBS?

THIS IS *BETTER* THAN MOST DAYS.

WE'RE ALMOST AT THE DROP SPOT GUYS. GET READY.

LOOKS LIKE THIS IS IT.

HERE, USE THIS.

THAT SHOVEL AGAIN?

TRUST ME.

WELL HERE GOES...

RWAAAWWR

THIS ISN'T THE MOST PRACTICAL SOURCE OF LIGHT.

SO SUE ME. I LIKE TO PERSONALIZE MY STUFF.

SO HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GET OUT OF HERE?

SHORT RANGE TELEPORTATION DEVICE BUILT INTO YOUR SUIT. LUCY CREATED IT USING ONE OF MORLACK'S OLD TOE NAILS.

SHE SEEMS TO HAVE A HABIT OF USING OLD BODY PARTS IN HER MACHINES? YOUR GAL IS REALLY WEIRD.

WHAT CAN I SAY? WEIRD WORKS.

HOLD UP...

I THINK I SEE SOMETHING.

SO OUR TOY SOLDIERS HAVE COME HOME?

SHE'S CHANGED FORM, BUT I KNOW THAT VOICE. IT'S HER! DIDN'T YOU KILL HER?

YEPPER.

BETTER KILL HER AGAIN THEN.

THAT WAS JUST ONE ASPECT. AS BRIDE OF THE ELDER I HAVE MORE POWER THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND.

SLOP

NO TONGUE ON THE FIRST DATE, BITCH!

GET YOUR UGLY ASS MOVING, I CAN HANDLE THIS.

YA' KNOW, KID...

YOU'RE ALRIGHT.

IF WE GET OUT OF THIS, I OWE YOU ONE.

TELL ME, CASSIE...

EVER WANTED TO SEE HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES?

SHUK

Meanwhile...

AS BRAINS GO, I SUPPOSE THAT'S A RESPECTABLE SIZE.

OF COURSE, THEY SAY IT'S NOT THE SIZE THAT COUNTS.

REGARDLESS, LET'S GIVE YOU ONE HELL OF HEADACHE.

1 2 3
4 5 6
9
0 #

YES, FEEL THE CHANGE OVERWHELMING YOU.

SOON WE'LL BE LIKE ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY.

NO THANKS...

ALREADY KILLED MINE.

WELL...

I'LL NEVER MOCK THE CONCEPT OF A MAGIC SHOVEL AGAIN.

NOW WHAT?

NOW? IT'S PAYBACK TIME, THAT'S WHAT!

SO WE'VE GONE FROM ZOMBIES TO GHOSTS? GEEZ, Y'ALL ARE FICKLE.

BLA

HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU BOYS, BUT BIG DADDY HERE IS ABOUT TO BE BLOWN TO BITS.

JUST ENOUGH TIME TO PICK THE MEAT FROM YOUR BONES.

HOW ABOUT YOU EAT THIS INSTEAD?

GOD, COULD THIS BE ANY MORE OF A MACHO DICK-WAVING CONTEST?

CREEP CALL DIBS ON GIRL.

THAT'S WHACK BRO, I SAW HER FIRST.

SPLORCH

SPLORCH

DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO THEM, JUST RUN TOWARDS ME.

BLOOMP BLOOMP

EASIER SAID THAN DONE DUDE.

SHIELD

THWAK

FOR A BUNCH OF SPIRITS THEY SEEM HUNGRY. I DON'T THINK I'D LET THEM BITE YOU.

PRESS THAT BUTTON ON YOUR ARM NOW!

THERE GOES OUR MEAL TICKET.

AND OUR TICKET OUT OF HERE.

0:00

1 2 3

6

IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS. NOW AFTER ALL OF THE WORLDS WE'VE RAVAGED.

BLAM BOOM

Hours later. St. Frankenstein Hospital.

WELL THIS HAS TO GO DOWN AS THE WEIRDEST DAY OF MY LIFE.

JUDGING FROM YOUR LIFE, THAT'S SAYING A LOT.

SO, I'VE BEEN WONDERING SOMETHING?

YEAH?

EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE AFRAID OF YOU. AND I EVEN ATTACKED YOU BASED ON MISINFORMATION AND FEAR. WHY DO YOU PROTECT NORMAL PEOPLE IF YOU DON'T GET ANYTHING IN RETURN?

SAME REASON YOU DO, I GUESS. BECAUSE IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

I WISH I FELT LIKE IT WAS THAT SIMPLE.

WELL IT'S LIKE...

I JUST GOT BACK FROM MAN-GOAT'S ROOM. LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO OKAY.

DID I INTERRUPT SOMETHING?

NAH...

LET'S JUST GET THE KIDS HOME.

Lucy's lab.

JUST STEP THROUGH THE PORTAL. IT SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

LUCY'S BEEN WORKING ON A SIMILAR DEVICE FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW. SHE KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING.

ONE THING BEFORE YOU GO.

SMEK

WOW...

I'M SEEING IT, BUT I'M NOT BELIEVING IT.

LIKE ON TELEVISION.

THAT'S FOR HELPING WHEN I NEEDED HELP.

COME ALONG ROMEO. I THINK IT JUST GOT LUKEWARM IN HERE.

HURR?

DO I NEED TO BE JEALOUS HERE?

C'MERE YOU...

WELL THIS ISN'T WHAT I WAS EXPECTING.

WELL IT SHOULDN'T BE.

HOLY SHIT! IT'S THE MAGIC HOMELESS GUY!

I CAN'T HAVE YOU TELLING SOMEONE ABOUT OUR DIMENSION. NEXT THING YOU KNOW WE'LL HAVE AN INVASION ON OUR HANDS.

HEY!

I PICKED THIS TRICK UP FROM A GIRL I DATED YEARS BACK. *EISSAC DNA DLAV TEGROF!*

...AND NEXT TIME, *STAY IN YOUR OWN DAMN DIMENSION!*

=YAWN=

HURR...

UM... WHERE THE HELL ARE WE?

WOODS.

YEAH... NO SHIT, SHERLOCK. WHERE DID YOU GET THAT LIPSTICK MARK ON YOUR MASK?

I DO NOT REMEMBER.

OKAY, WE NEED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS.

WHAT IN THE FUCK?

CASSIE HACK?

UM... YEAH?

NAME'S HECK GAL, BSID. I NEED YOU TO RETURN TO MY HOME DIMENSION WITH ME. YOU HAVE TO HELP ME STOP THE ZOMBIE ARMY OF ADOLF-

I'VE GOT THE STRANGEST FEELING OF DEJA VU.

HURR. YES. HAVE BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...

SORRY HORNHEAD - I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF SECRET WAR WE'VE JUST BEEN THROUGH, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY OUR FINAL CRISIS FOR THE DAY.

THE END.

HACK/SLASH vs. HALLOWEEN MAN

Written by **Drew Edwards** Pencilled by **David Baldeón** Inked by **Scott D.M. Simmons**

Colors by **Marc Lewis** Art Direction and Letters by **Brian J. Crowley** Edited by **Russell Hillman**

THE LIVING CORPSE™

GUEST STARRING

HACK/SLASH™

zenescope™

ANNUAL #1

$4.99

COVER A by **BUZ HASSON & KEN HAESER**

EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD HAS THEIR OWN LOCAL LEGENDS.

OH, BABY, I LOVE YOU.

OW, BRAD, YOU'RE ON MY HAIR.

NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COASTAL HERITAGE TRAIL

SOUTHERN NJ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NO CAMPING

MOST PASS THEM OFF AS A MYTH OR DISREGARD THEM AS CAMPFIRE STORIES.

SORRY, JEN. I'M JUST SO HOT FOR YOU.

IT'S GINA.

RIGHT.

BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO BELIEVE.

BRAD--- WHAT'S...

THEY DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT THE SHADOWS CAST BY THE CAMPFIRE CAN BE AS REAL AS THEY ARE.

THAT MOST OF THE LEGENDS...

...ARE VERY MUCH REAL.

THE LIVING CORPSE AND HACK/SLASH IN:

THE LEGEND OF THE JERSEY DEVIL

BY KEN HAESER AND BUZ HASSON

OH, MY GOD!

THERE IS A VERY FINE LINE BETWEEN THE LIGHT AND THE SHADOW.

WHERE THE HUMAN WORLD AND THE REALM OF MONSTERS OVERLAP.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO GUARD THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE WORLDS...

SOMEONE WHO IS A PART OF NEITHER.

AND THAT'S WHERE I COME IN.

HAVEN'T YOU KIDS LEARNED *ANYTHING* FROM HORROR MOVIES?

WHAT ARE YOU *SUICIDAL*- SCREWING IN THE WOODS?

NO, NO, YOU GUYS GO AHEAD AND GET OUT OF HERE.

YOU'VE SCARED HIM ENOUGH BY SHOWING HOW FAST YOU CAN RUN AWAY.

SHEESH--- KIDS THESE DAYS.

AND YOU...

ROAR!!

GUH--- NICE.

DOES YOUR *MOTHER* KNOW THAT YOU'RE OUT THIS *LATE*?

YEAH, I DIDN'T *THINK* SO.

GO ON! GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, YOU FURRY BASTARD!

I CATCH YOU SO MUCH AS ***SNEEZING*** TOWARDS ANOTHER STUPID HUMAN, AND I'LL BE ***WEARING*** YOU FOR A COAT!

IT'S A DIRTY JOB, BUT BLAH BLAH BLAH.

I KEEP THE PEACE AND BALANCE THE SCALES.

BESIDES...

...WHO ELSE IS GONNA DO IT?

PIECE OF S#!T!

HOW THE *HELL* DO YOU GET *LOST* IN SUCH A SMALL STATE?

THAT CREEP AT THE GAS STATION SAID ALL THE SIGHTINGS ARE RIGHT AROUND THIS AREA... *WHEREVER* THIS IS!

DAMMIT, THIS PLACE IS FRUSTRATING!

(AND NOW IT'S GOT ME TALKING TO MYSELF!)

I'M GOING RIGHT BACK TO THAT GAS STATION AND *SHOVING* THIS MAP UP THAT PRICK'S...

PLEASE!! HELP US!

WELL, HEY, GUYS--- WHERE'S THE PARTY?

MONSTERS! MONSTERS IN THE WOODS!

MONSTERS, HUH? IS ONE OF THEM BIG AND HAIRY WITH ANTLERS?

YES! ***YES!*** PLEASE, WE NEED TO GET IN THE VAN AND GET THE ***HELL*** OUT OF HERE!!

WELL, HOT DAMN! LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AFTER ALL!

VLAD! WAKE UP, BIG GUY...

WAM!

WAM!

WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.

HMMF...

AND THEY SAY THAT CHIVALRY IS DEAD...

HURR... SHE DOESN'T LOOK DEAD- ONLY FAINTED.

DID I ***MISS*** SOMETHING, CASSANDRA?

WHY WAS CHIVALRY AND HER FRIEND ***RUNNING*** AROUND THE WOODS IN UNDERWEAR?

SAME REASON WE'RE OUT HERE IN THE WOODS OF BUMBLE F$@K NEW JERSEY...

SOMETHING ***SPOOKED*** THE TWO HORNDOGS... SOMETHING THAT SOUNDS A LOT LIKE THE CREATURE WE'RE ***LOOKING*** FOR.

HRRM... JERSEY DEVIL CREATURE, CORRECT?

BINGO. THEY SAY THIS SLASHER HAS BEEN HUNTING IN THESE WOODS FOR ***HUNDREDS*** OF YEARS.

WE ***FIND*** THIS BIG, HAIRY DOUCHEBAG, ***KICK*** HIS ***ASS***, AND THEN WE CAN SPEND THE REST OF THE TRIP GETTING MASSAGES AND ROOM SERVICE IN ATLANTIC CITY.

ANY QUESTIONS?

HMM...

WHAT KIND OF NAME IS CHIVALRY?

LATER...

HRRM... THESE TRACKS ARE HOOF PRINTS, CASSIE...

HOW DO WE KNOW IT IS NOT AN ANIMAL ATTACKING THESE CAMPERS?

THE LEGENDS SAY THAT THIS "JERSEY DEVIL" WAS THE 13TH SON OF A WITCH NAMED MOTHER LEEDS AND THE DEVIL HIMSELF.

THEY SAY IT'S GOT THE HEAD OF A GOAT, THE WINGS OF A BAT AND HOOFED FEET...

WATCH YOUR HEAD, VLAD--- LOW BRIDGE.

THUMP!

OW!

THAT SOUNDS A LOT LIKE THE DESCRIPTION FROM THE UNDERWEAR COUPLE...

AH HA!

TRACKS LEAD RIGHT TO *THAT*.

HMM... CREEPY OLD HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOODS.

IT IS IN THERE... I CAN FEEL IT.

ALL RIGHT, VLAD, YOU KNOW THE DRILL.

YOU CIRCLE AROUND BACK. I'LL GO IN THE FRONT AND *FLUSH* HIM BACK TOWARD *YOU*.

AND I *SWEAR* TO GOD, IF THERE'S ONLY SOME GUY IN THERE *STANDING* IN THE CORNER, I WANT MY MONEY BACK.

HELLO? ANYBODY HOME?

I'M JUST HERE TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE LORD AND DROP OFF SOME ISSUES OF THE WATCHTOWER.

THERE'S A GREAT ARTICLE IN THERE ABOUT ***DEMONS*** WHO GET THEIR ASSES ***KICKED*** BY GIRLS WITH BASE-BALL BATS.

I FIGURE YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO RELATE...

GUH! WHAT IS THAT...

...STENCH...?

SSS

RRRROOOOWWWL!

HA! GOTCHA, SUCKER!

HURRR...

SHLUK!

HEY, BIG GUY! SAVE A LITTLE FOR ME!

HURRN!

KRAK!

KRAK!

SHLUK!

HNNN!

CHUK!

AND THAT'S THAT! NICE AND EASY... JUST THE WAY I LIKE IT.

HMMM... MAYBE *TOO* EASY?

TOO EASY?

SHLUK!

YES, CASSIE, TOO EASY.

THIS CREATURE HAS BEEN HUNTING HERE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, CORRECT?

THAT'S WHAT THEY TELL ME.

THUMP!

WHY WOULD SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN TERRORIZING PEOPLE FOR THAT LONG, "GO DOWN LIKE A BITCH" AS YOU WOULD SAY?

'CAUSE WE'RE JUST THAT *GOOD*, VLAD.

HMMM...

YOU KNOW WHAT? NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THE UNDERWEAR COUPLE DID SAY "MONSTERS".

HRRR... SO THERE IS MORE THAN ONE.

GUESS THE MASSAGES AND ROOM SERVICE ARE GONNA HAVE TO WAIT. WE'RE NOT DONE HERE YET.

MY BABY...

NO... NO...

NOOOOOOOO!!!!

THAT SCREAM--- FULL OF ANGER AND DESPAIR...

DOESN'T SOUND QUITE... HUMAN.

CAME FROM BACK TOWARDS THE KIDS' CAMPSITE.

DEFINITELY DIDN'T SOUND LIKE ONE OF THEM.

DIDN'T SOUND LIKE THE JERSEY DEVIL EITHER...

DAMMIT--- I REALLY HOPE...

THAT SCREAM ISN'T FROM WHO I THINK IT IS.

HURRN!

HA! IF YOU WANT TO SNEAK UP ON ME, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO BE A LITTLE MORE ***SUBTLE*** THAN THAT.

MAYBE IN A TANK OR STAMPEDE OF BUFFALO.

CHUK!

IS IT ME? I KNOW I DON'T SMELL LIKE ROSES, BUT IT CAN'T BE ***THAT*** BAD!

RIGHT?

KRAK!

SO WHAT'S UP WITH THE GAS MASK, GRUESOME?

HURR...

ZOMBIE MAN TALKS TOO MUCH.

KRAK!

OWW.

OKAY--- SO YOU'RE THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE. I CAN RESPECT THAT.

I GUESS YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CAUSED THAT SCREAM A LITTLE WHILE AGO.

NO.

NO? REALLY?

IN THAT CASE I'VE GOT ONE MORE QUESTION FOR YOU...

WHAT'S THE CAPITAL OF THAILAND?

WHAT?...

CRUNCH!

EEP!

ALRIGHT, NUT SACK...

NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR *COMPLETE* AND *TOTAL* ATTENTION, YOU'RE GOING TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.

SHLUK!

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?

BETTER ANSWER QUICK, BIG BOY. THE LONGER I HAVE TO WAIT, THE MORE OF YOUR BODY PARTS I HAVE TO CHOP OFF TO KILL MY BOREDOM.

KRAK!

GET *AWAY* FROM HIM!!

IF YOU'VE *HURT* HIM, I SWEAR I'LL *SPLATTER* YOUR BRAINS ACROSS THE...

UNG---
DAMN, GIRL. I FORGOT HOW HARD YOU CAN HIT.

HOW YA BEEN, CASSIE?

CORPSE? IS THAT YOU!?

GEEZ, MAN! IT'S BEEN FOREVER. WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?

OH, THE USUAL. JUST BEATING UP ON THIS BIG RETARD TRYING TO GET SOME ANSWERS OUT OF HIM.

HE A FRIEND OF YOURS?

HUURM...

YOU KNOW THIS ZOMBIE, CASSIE?

YEA, HE'S...

KA-BOOM!!!

MURDERERS!!

FILTHY, DIRTY MURDERERS!!!

YOU KILLED MY SON---

MY PRECIOUS THIRTEENTH SON!!

YOU WILL PAY!---

YOU WILL ALL PAY IN BLOOD!!

WAIT A MINUTE...

DID YOU ASSHOLES *REALLY* KILL THE JERSEY DEVIL?

UMM...

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!

THE JERSEY DEVIL IS NOT MUCH MORE THAN A *WILD ANIMAL!*

SURE, IT SCARES PEOPLE AWAY FROM ITS LAND, BUT IT HAS NEVER *HURT* ANYONE.

IT KEEPS PEOPLE AWAY FROM ITS HOME--- ITS HOME IT SHARES WITH ITS *MOTHER*...

...THAT *PISSED OFF* BROAD OVER THERE!

THE ONLY THING YOU TWO HAVE DONE IS *KILL* THE ONLY THING THAT RAGING BITCH *CARES* ABOUT!

WITHOUT HIM TO KEEP HER IN CHECK, SHE IS GONNA RELEASE *HOLY HELL* ON US AND *EVERYONE* IN THE AREA.

MY SON! MY LOVELY SON!!

YOU WILL ALL DIE--- THIS WORLD WILL DIE!!

AND IT WILL BE AT THE HANDS OF MY PRECIOUS CHILDREN!

HURRRN...

...RRRRR...

HUF! HUF!

SPLORT

THUD!

SKREEEE!!!

THAT'S IT?

IT'S KIND OF... CUTE.

OH, THAT'S DEFINITELY NOT IT.

SHE'S A WITCH, CASSIE--- SHE'LL KEEP *PUMPING* THOSE THINGS OUT UNTIL WE'RE NOTHING BUT *SCRAPS*.

IN THAT CASE---

THUD!

WE CHOP HER UP UNTIL SHE STOPS!

SKREE!!

THERE'S *TOO* MANY OF 'EM!

KRAK!

SKREE!!

IT'S NO GOOD!

WE NEED TO FIND SOMETHING TO *PLUG* HER UP!!

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU...

ONE PLUG---

SKREE!!

COMING UP!!

SH-LNTT!!

SKREE!!

GUH!

HURK---

NO!

GET OUT! GET...

HUKK!

CAN'T STOP!

CAN'T--- URRRRR...

I'M GONNA---

I'M GONNA---

POP!

EWWW...

PLOP!

PLOP!

PLOP!

NO OFFENSE, CASSIE...

BUT YOUR BIG FRIEND OVER THERE IS GOING TO LEARN SOME MANNERS.

SORRY, CORPSE. HE'S A FIGHTER, NOT A THINKER.

IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PRETTY, BUT THAT'S ONE LESS *CRAZY* WITCH IN THE WORLD, RIGHT?

HRRR...

IT WAS GREAT SEEING YOU AGAIN, CORPSE!

SORRY ABOUT THE MESS! YOU KNOW--- IT'S A DIRTY JOB, AND NO ONE DOES IT BETTER THAN YOU!

SEE YA AROUND!

LIKE I SAID BEFORE--- EVERY PART OF THE WORLD HAS THEIR OWN LEGENDS.

C'MON, VLAD! THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF TIME FOR MASSAGES AND ROOM SERVICE!

I JUST HOPE THAT WHEN THEY WRITE THIS ONE---

THEY LEAVE THIS PART OUT.

THE END!

HACK/SLASH

COVER & PIN-UP GALLERY

PIN-UP by **MATT WAITE**

PIN-UP by **LUKE 3-D**

PIN-UP by DAN CROSIER

PIN-UP by **MIA FRAZIER**

PIN-UP by TIM SEELEY

PIN-UP by **TIM SEELEY & KATE DE SOUSA**

GOT SLASHERS?

CALL 312-800-CASSIEHELP

PIN-UP by **ALYSSA HUNT**

PIN-UP by NOTTY ROTTY

PIN-UP BY NOTTY ROTTY

KISS

PIN-UP by TIM SEELEY

PIN-UP by **SIMONE GABRIELLI**

HACK/SLASH™

THE GIRL IN THE FISHNET STOCKINGS

written by
STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES

spot illustrations by
JIM TERRY

MY NAME IS CASSIE HACK AND I KILL SLASHERS.

"My name is Cassie Hack, and I kill slashers."

My voice is creaky because I've been waiting in this garage for four hours, but still, in the silence and the darkness, the words splat like a car battery onto the slick concrete.

"Slashers?" is the question that comes back at me after about a half minute of what feels like calculation.

"Revenge killers back from the dead," I explain in the most bored tone I can throw.

Seriously, I should get it printed on a business card. Save me some time.

For most of the four hours I've been waiting, I've been sitting on the chest freezer, my thigh-high boots swinging. The heels are chunky, but not chunky enough to scrape the ground, quite.

As for the rest of me, it's the usual: half-shirt, fishnet here and there, fingerless gloves, skirt that might as well be a belt.

Not that this cat can see me yet, either . . . or *can* he?

I princess-wave into the blackness, and while I don't get any *hello hello* back, nothing so creepy and boogeyman as that, I do see a new sort of swishing in the crack of light showing under the garage door.

He can see me. *Shit*.

I pull my feet up under me, tell my thigh muscles to get ready, that this is a solo run, no Vlad to back us up tonight.

Everybody needs an evening off, to watch Cinemax alone in a hotel room.

Until now, this had sort of been my version of rest and relaxation: four uninterrupted hours of just sitting here with my own thoughts. No ducking blades or claws, hammers or teeth. No trading quips with some maggot brain. No getting blindsided around every next corner.

But a girl can get kind of bored, too.

Every time my thoughts get too tangled, too paranoid, I've been making the rounds of this family's garage. What this means is that I've ran my fingertips over the dust on this bouncier-walker thing for toddlers at least six times. I've let the streamers on this bike's grips wrap around my hand over and over, trying to keep me here. I've read "Christmas" off one box, "Easter" off another, and I've even studied and studied the for outside of a white cardboard box that just reads "Memories," with a heart for the dot over the *i*.

I admit, my sneer at seeing that heart was kind of instinctual.

But I keep coming back to that box, too, even when I'm not walking by it.

What would be in my memory box if I had one, right?

The easy answer is a series of yellowing news clippings about my mom, the Lunch Lady, killer of I don't even care how many.

Except—you don't memorialize that kind of stuff, do you?

No, I think what's in this box are the happy times. The times before you realize who and what your mother is. The times you're not at school, getting teased and tortured.

I can't tell you how badly I wanted to open this family's box, and how terrified I was to even consider it.

Instead, I ripped myself away time and again, made myself go to the workbench instead, since it had stuff that could save my life. A few rounds ago, like walking back and forth past your future dance partner, I finally settled on a pruning saw for this night's activities. It's basically an oversize hacksaw, but the teeth on the blade are ragged and jagged, could have used some braces for sixth grade. I pull those across any part of you, that part's never going to be the same again.

There were drills and hammers I could have gone with, utility knives and even a nailgun, but the fact that I didn't even *want* to run the flat of my fingers across this dangerous blade told me it was the right tool for what was coming.

As for how I knew to wait in this garage—I'll be honest, I didn't. It's kind of a crapshoot every time. Well, not *every* time. Sometimes it's just obvious it's the sorority house, the bonfire party, or sometimes there's a theme: if reports are of a killer wearing an apron, say, then I should probably set up camp at the donut shop.

This rash of killings, though . . . I had to roll the dice.

What I did know was that it was going to be somewhere in this neighborhood: the last two slaughtered families were a few houses down. Meaning this slasher's lair is close by, some forgotten cave or abandoned house, maybe a fort back in the trees the kids don't go to so much anymore. The lair would be the slasher's territory, though, and I wouldn't have the advantage there.

Better to jump him like this, while he's on the job, as he sees it.

Why I finally settled on this house instead of the others was that the houses of those other two dead families, there was no obvious sign of a break-in. So, this slasher was taking advantage of some hole in the security, as it were, "security" and "defensive perimeters" not being exactly of paramount concern here in the land of the safe.

The "hole" I exploited to get into this house was simply that

they'd left the garage door up a few inches, probably for a cat to go back and forth.

Stupid, I know, but you can't blame the idiots.

And, it wasn't super easy, wriggling in—my stomach's flat enough, but not all of me, ahem, is—and it got dirt and junk onto the back of my shirt and my hair, but screw it. Killing slashers isn't supposed to be easy, is it?

Good thing I didn't bring Vlad tonight, too. I'd have had to park him at the curb, or in the tall shrubs out there, which is to say I'd have been setting out a big, hulking "Stay Away!" beacon.

No thanks.

Vlad's the best, don't get me wrong, but sometimes I'm better on my own.

"I guess I *am* back from the dead . . . " this voice mewls from that crack of light it just used to get in, in response to me defining a slasher.

I slide down from the chest freezer, test the balance of this wicked little saw, of course snagging it in the netting I've got stretched over these gloves, which is pretty embarrassing for a halfway-reformed goth.

Ri-ip.

"Sorry about that," this slasher tells me.

"I've got more," I tell him back.

"So, you say you kill slashers?" he says then, and I kind of have to squint.

What, are we in a dialogue, here? Can't we let our weapons do the talking? What gives?

"You're stalling," I say.

"No, no," he purrs back. "I just want to be sure we're both on the same page."

"Yes, I kill the hell out of slashers."

"Good, good," he says. "They sound like they need it."

They?

"Including you," I add.

"Well . . . " he says. "Let's not—I don't want you doing anything you might regret, here."

"Did you not kill the Wilkersons, two doors down?" I ask. "Was that not you who tore through the, the—"

"Bandlings?"

"Yeah, Band-somethings,"I say. "Mom, Dad, three kids, all in their beds."

"No, no, that was definitely me," he says.

"*And* you're back from the dead," I tell him, switching the

pruning saw to my other hand, mostly out of impatience.

"But I'm not a . . . " he says, "what did you say the key ingredient was? Revenge?"

"Yes, revenge," I say, obviously. "If you weren't out for justice, you'd be taking this show on the road, just killing whoever."

"*Whomever.*"

This is what I need: to have my grammar corrected by a slobbering maniac.

I say, "Listen, can we just—" and step forward, wading into the night's violence.

"Okay, okay, I hear you," he says, "and I think I understand the source of this . . . misunderstanding."

This stops me.

Pretty damn intellectual for someone whose brain was deprived of oxygen for ten years, right? Deprived of oxygen and moldering in the fetid stew the insides of its skull had become.

And, is *whose* right, there?

Fuck—he's getting to me.

Some nights, I hate this job.

"Misunderstanding?" I have to say, though, all the same.

"I'm not targeting this neighborhood because they did anything

wrong to me or my kind, per se. It's just sort of . . . random? I need to . . . I guess you could say 'store up' some calories before taking my show on the road, as you so aptly phrase it."

"What do you mean?" I ask.

"Seven years ago," he says, still just a voice from the shadows, "a car hits me, breaks my pelvis, my legs—not pretty, as you can imagine. I drag myself to the side of the road as you do, and then, over the course of that afternoon, I expire. When the flies and the birds start to get interested—which, I don't begrudge them their hunger—then some good samaritan, neither a Wilkerson nor a Bandling, kindly scooped me in a shovel to the empty lot, and disposed of my remains."

"But you—"

"Can I finish?"

I just stand there.

"Thank you. Now, what this good samaritan had no way of knowing was that where he buried me was over the septic tank of the previous neighborhood, where that homeowner had, evidently, been conducting late night experiments involving radiation, and disposing of his work in the toilet."

"So this septic tank glowed green," I say, connecting the dots.

"I see you're no stranger to this breed of goings-on," the voice says. "Once I collapsed into this radioactive petri dish . . . do I need to say any more?"

"Only that someone ran you over, someone buried you, and I only have your word to go on that it wasn't a Wilkerson, a Bandling."

"No, no," he says. "What I'm trying to . . . I never asked to come back at all, please, you must understand. But I don't hold any ill will towards that previous homeowner, either. Wouldn't he be first on my to-do list, were I out for revenge? Really—do you have a light over there?"

I look around, my lips thin with anger. The way flashlights work when you're fighting slashers is that they paint a bullseye on you—no thank you.

"The freezer you were sitting on, perhaps?" he asks, ever so politely.

Do freezers have lights in them? How long have I been living in hotel rooms and vans?

I crack the lid open, sure I'm just going to feel a fog of coldness wafting up, and: bam. Let there be 40-watt light.

I spin fast, then, certain this was a ruse. Get the slasher-killer to turn her back, so you can open her up.

But there's no blade coming.

My eyes slowly adjust to this new light.

This voice I've been talking to, it belongs to . . . what used to be a cat?

Just, this one's been run over then smeared around and cooked in its own rotten juices, so it's a loooong cat, and is all janky and bent and wrong in the worst ways.

"Shit," I say, not even meaning to.

"I know," this cat says. "But, as you can see, I didn't ask to be pulled back into this life, but, now that I'm here, I can only feed on what I must, in order to store up enough calories to effect my limited recovery. I know—I know my glory days of watching goldfish in aquariums are gone, and I'll never catch a canary again, will probably never chase a red dot back and forth across the floor, but, if I can just get myself put back together enough, then I plan to retreat to an abandoned subdivision, where I can live on the rodents I catch, and walk through the broken down homes, remembering their better days. And mine as well."

"But you're—these families."

"Would you punish me for eating mice, Miss Cassie Hack? I presume you're not married?"

"Just to this," I tell him, slapping the pruning saw into my right palm, and of course snagging the teeth in *that* fishnet as well.

"If I qualify for your . . . your *mission*, then please, I must be evil, you would dispatch no one who wasn't . . . "

"I kill slashers," I tell him after a digestive beat. A particularly pregnant-ass pause.

"Is that what I am?" he asks, his voice breaking the littlest bit, and, maybe for the first time ever, I close my eyes in the presence of someone with a bodycount.

He doesn't rip my throat out. He doesn't take me out at the knees.

"This is . . . it *is* what you do, isn't it?" I finally have to say. "What you—what you *have* to do?"

He nods yes, as if not proud of it himself, and so I , Cassie Hack, killer of killers, protector of innocents who don't deserve it, step aside, giving him access to the interior of this house, and the warm, wet interiors of its occupants.

Until, trying to just focus on the crack of light under the garage door and not be some holy roller about rules and right and wrong, trying to just let nature take its ugly course, I see —

His *real* shadow.

He's feline, for sure—those ears, that tail, the claws—but he's human as well. Human and . . . and pulling off some sort of headfog or trick, I don't know. And? And of course he is, Cassie Hack, don't be stupid. Are slashers not known for masks?

Who says a mask is just something they strap to their faces?

They can be something on my face just the same, so long as it hides his real identity.

And then I open *my* memory box, remember watching a cat in the lawn one Saturday afternoon, a cat hypnotizing a snake, lulling it into safety, so it—this cat—can slash forward, take that snake's face off.

But only if that snake's been lulled to sleep with its eyes open.

"You almost had me," I say, and in that same moment I'm

YOU ALMOST HAD ME.

dragging the hungry teeth of my pruning saw across the back of this slasher's neck, and just like I knew, I snag the the spinal column enough to snap it out like a tapeworm, Pez his cat head forward onto his chest.

He collapses onto the floor, his evil blood seeping out across the concrete.

By the morning, after clean-up and disposal—this family doesn't need *this* memory for their box—it'll just be another oil stain.

Sure, their chest freezer will be gone, will be another coffin I've left behind on my mission, but that's a small price to pay for waking with your throat intact, isn't it?

As for where that chest freezer will now be buried . . . in concrete, let's say. Under a skyscraper just going up.

Not in a radioactive septic tank.

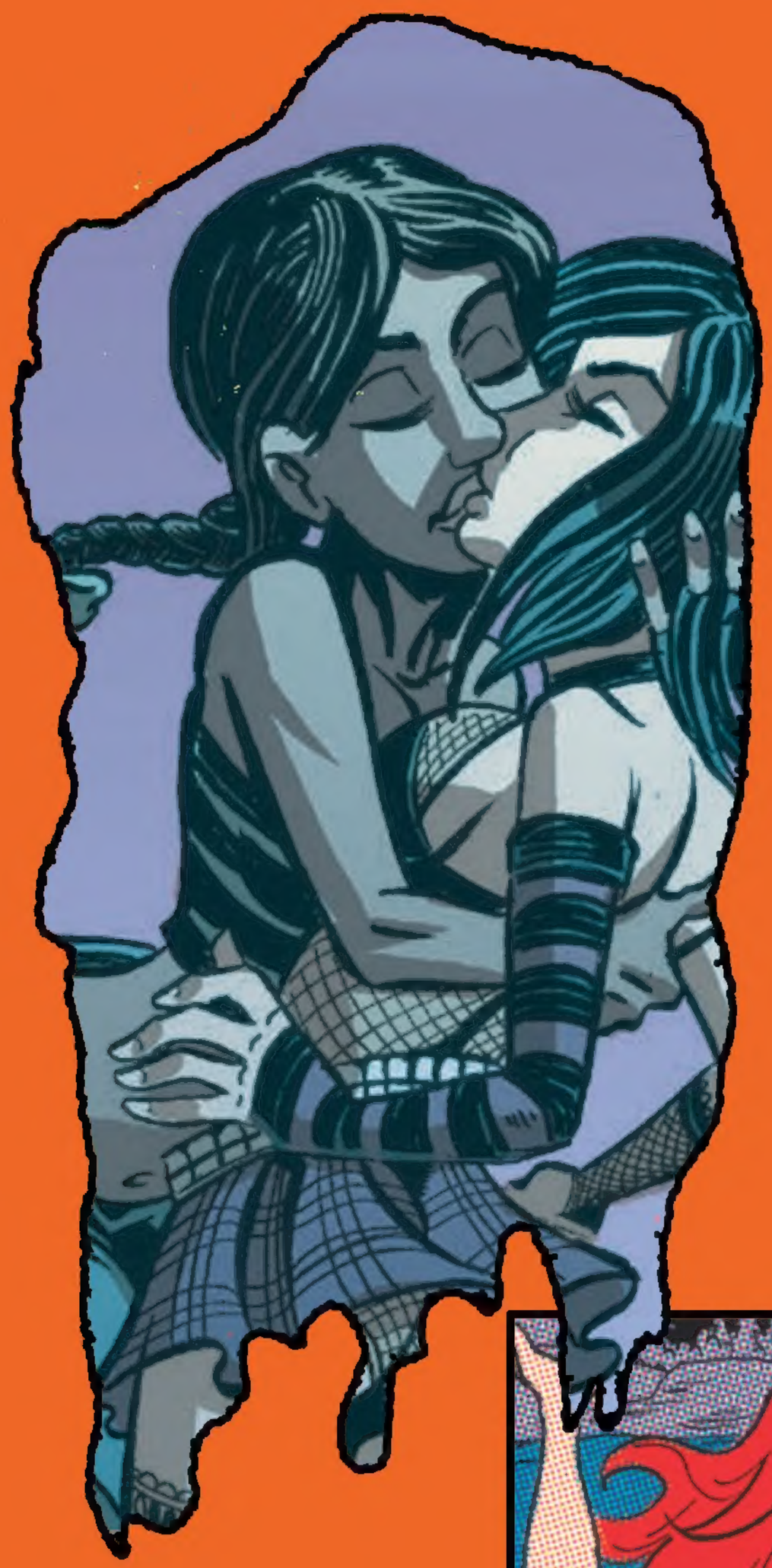
I'm trying to clean this place up, I mean, not make it worse.

Just, fingers crossed that when that skyscraper's done, the elevator door doesn't open at the top floor one day to let a sinuous, silver-tongued, broken-backed cat weave out between the sea of legs, to set up shop in the cubicles, start another bloody cycle up.

That's still twenty, thirty years out, though.

For now, I'll drag another hashmark into my bat, and move on down the road.

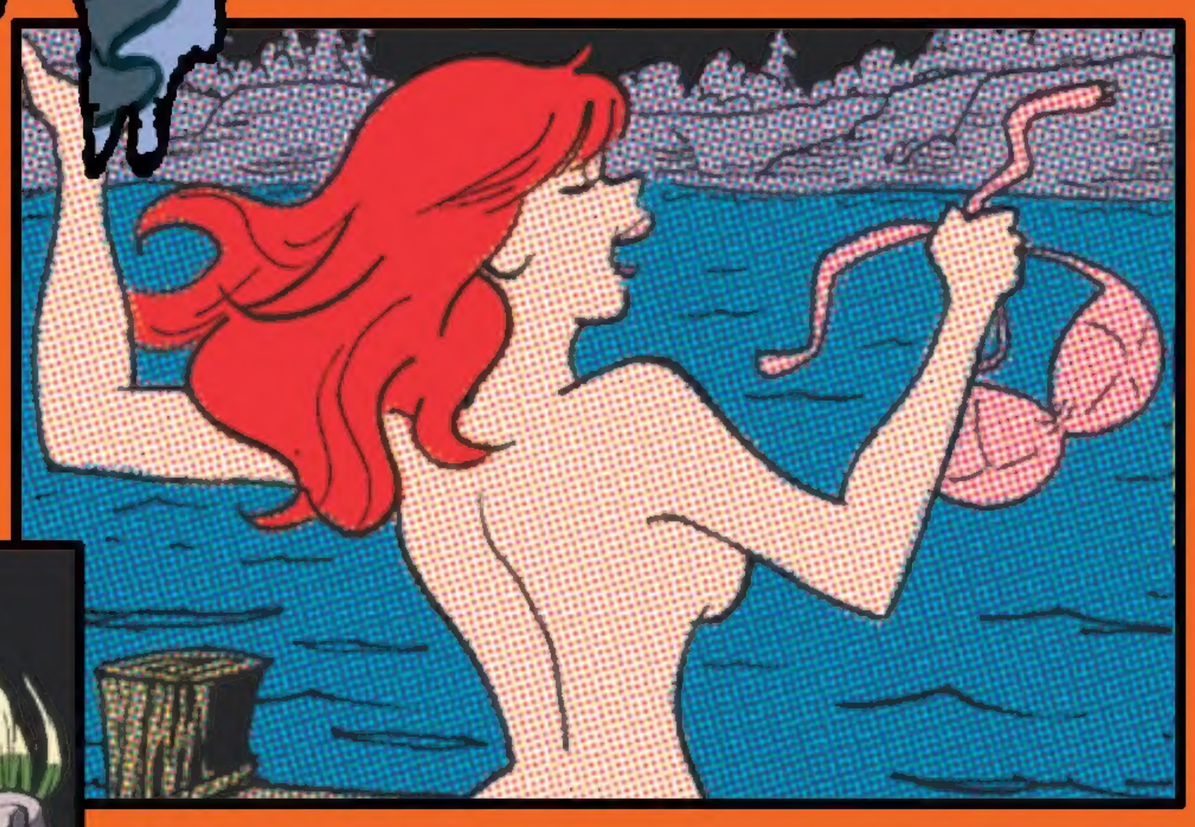
Cassie Hack, out.



NEW FRIENDS, ALLIES ...AND VICTIMS.

In almost every slasher movie, there's one girl who makes it all the way to the end. She's the survivor... the final girl. Meet Cassie Hack, the lone survivor of an attack by the vicious slasher known as the Lunch Lady. Now Cassie and her monstrous partner Vlad travel the country, hunting down and killing other slashers before they can leave a trail of blood and terror.

This HACK/SLASH DELUXE edition collects issues #18-34 of the Hack/Slash ongoing series as well as the award-winning ENTRY WOUND one-shot, and features the debut of fan-favorite characters Cat Curio and Samhain. Also includes a bonus prose story by Stephen Graham Jones (*The Only Good Indians*) with illustrations by Jim Terry.



MARCUS NISPEL, director of THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE and FRIDAY THE 13th says "Hack/Slash gets it right....here, Cassie gets to do all the hacking and slashing (and she looks fucking hot doing it!) Pray for Freddy, Jason and Leatherface!"

2023, COLOR, APPROX 480 PAGES / RECOMMENDED FOR MATURE READERS / HORROR

IHC
IMAGE HARD COVER

29 SUPER Video
SCHOFIELD, WI

image

CGN004040